

exposé

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exposé

by [elfxee](#)

Summary

George was an Omega living life as though he was an Beta. He took scent-blockers, played on the school's soccer team and wore a pair of thick clout goggles to hide his eye colour. No one had ever come close to finding out the truth, and they never would- and that was just the way he liked it.

Or it was until a new, pretty Alpha in his Comp-Sci class changed everything for him.

Notes

hi, thank you all so much for reading!!

this fic might contain possible triggers, so please keep an eye on the tags! they could change at any point as this story develops. i'll write them in the notes before any triggering chapters too :)

also, if the boundaries of any cc mentioned in this fic change, it will be edited or deleted immediately! all characters are based on their online personas and not the irl streamers.

also, everyone in this fic is 18+ unless mentioned otherwise or is obviously younger/older.
george is 19, and the rest of the feral boys are 18 :)

with that being said, please enjoy!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George had presented as an Omega earlier than most.

It had happened whilst he was young, far too young for anyone he grew up with to remember the whole ordeal. He'd been dozing off in class when his stomach started burning, his entire mind turning into a fog-like state as he entered his first heat. His teachers had been quick to act, calling his parents to whisk him out of the school before he could trigger any other presentations. That had been in third grade, and the rest of the year flew by as he all but trained himself into acting like a Beta.

Even as an eight-year-old, George knew the horrors that were associated with his second gender. Despite new laws against discrimination being put in place globally, or the few extra rights that Omegas were given, they were still beneath every other gender in societies eyes. Female Omegas were treated marginally better than males, but not enough to the point where George could call himself jealous.

George's parents knew the danger that his gender put him in, and quickly taught him everything he needed to know. They were nothing but supportive, even going so far as to move abroad to America where things were slightly more accepting. Unfortunately due to this he was held back a year- which meant he presented a *lot* earlier than his new classmates. George didn't mind, though, as it gave him a completely clean slate.

At the age of nine, he started using scent-blockers, and by ten he was taking suppressants. The gold colour that took over his eyes when feeling exceptionally emotional only became a problem when he was thirteen, and so from that point forward he took to wearing a white pair of 'clout goggles'. George was determined to never be limited to just his status and worked extremely hard to ensure that it would never be found out.

The pills he took ensured that he looked and smelt like nothing. His scent was that of a default Beta, clean and neutral in the way that it wouldn't affect anyone if he got emotional. He hadn't had a heat since he started taking heat-suppressants, and so his body never really reached its full potential either. George didn't have the curves or softness that an Omega generally had, and instead was all sharp lines and pointy bones.

He pretended that his appearance didn't bother him, but sometimes he'd stare at his hips longingly in the mirror- mourning a softness that he'd probably never have.

When George started high school, he decided that he needed to stand out in a way that would ensure he *wouldn't* stand out. His grades were high, but not high enough to draw attention to himself. He was nice to everyone unless they gave him a reason not to be, and even then he kept his disliking under wraps. An emotional outburst was the absolute *last* thing he needed.

Surprisingly, he found trying to be average *exhausting*, but knew he had to maintain it if he wanted to keep his secret. His suppressants were good, but not good enough that they'd be able to hide him forever. It would only take one small slip of the tongue or leak of his scent before everyone would find out. The more neutral he kept his life, the smaller chance there was of it happening.

George eventually joined the school's soccer team, maintaining a safe position within it that would

keep the focus off of him during matches. He played well, never being the person to fumble the ball- yet also never causing the winning goals. By doing so, he got to sit with the team at lunch- giving him a secure network of people that helped him to blend in and keep up a semi-popular status.

He kept the group of people he talked to small, and the people that he considered friends even smaller.

Quackity was probably the only person he'd call a 'best friend', what with the shorter man constantly clinging to him like glue. He was a Beta himself and seemed to get along with almost everyone around him, which is how he landed a seat next to George at their lunch table. Despite not being on the team, they all seemed to love him and happily let him hang out with them during their breaks.

It was because of Quackity that George managed to become noticeably unnoticeable. He dragged him to parties and out with him on the weekends, but also respected George's decisions enough to not bug him if he said no to something. He was annoying and brash and *loud*, but George knew that there was no one he would rather call his best friend. Quackity was one of the few highlights of his monotonous days.

The other highlight was his Comp-Sci class.

George loved computers, but especially coding and programming. It came to him naturally- letting him sit hunched over one of the school desktops for hours upon hours writing flawless code for various projects. It was also one of the few subjects where he let himself be free, not worrying about trying to keep a natural grade. He collected his A+'s with pride and made sure that he never failed a test or project, uncaring of the possible 'nerd' reputation that came along with it. Thankfully, his position with the 'jocks' prevented such a thing from happening.

George walked into his first Comp-Sci class of the year with a content hum, his body instantly relaxing at the smell of the familiar room. He was finally a Senior, and with being one came new knowledge that excited him to no end. The class was his last period of the day, meaning that he could go straight home after and relax. Everyone in the small lab smelt familiar, too, having known most of them since he'd started taking the subject two years prior. It was perfect.

Until it wasn't.

In George's normal seat, the one that was in the middle-right of the classroom, sat a boy he'd never seen before. Everyone had established a 'seat' when they had first started, so to see someone where he would normally be made his eyes narrow in annoyance. He let out a quiet grumble, adjusting the bag on his shoulder before stalking up to the stranger with a scolding in his throat, "Excuse me, but you're in my-"

George froze when he locked eyes with him.

Bright green eyes stare back at him in surprise and confusion, almost hidden behind the mess of golden hair atop his head. It stops just above his eyebrows, parted in a way that exposes the middle of his forehead. He's only wearing a simple hoodie, an obnoxious lime in colour, but George hates to admit that it suits him. A line of piercings glint at him when the boy tilts his head, mouth parting slightly in shock.

That *small* action is what sent George reeling backwards.

An abrupt, overwhelming scent of what smelt like sandalwood and beaches hit him all at once. It

encompassed him, warming him from the inside out as it curled around his body like a second skin. George inhaled it greedily, suddenly thankful that his glasses hid the dilation of his pupils. If he focused hard enough, he could almost picture himself lying down on hot sand, the sound of waves crashing peacefully behind him.

"...Hey, are you okay?" The stranger asked, and George almost felt himself falling in love. His voice was the perfect mix of deepness and raspiness, not too low that it would annoy the shit out of him, but not so high that he could be mistaken for a Beta. He didn't realise he was frozen until the man spoke again, "Do I need to get the teacher or something?"

"Fuck- no, I'm fine," George quickly shook his head, his cheeks slightly red in embarrassment. God, he was such a mess. He gestured down at the desk uselessly, almost feeling bad for what he was about to say, "You're just... you're kinda in my seat."

"Oh," The boy blinked, his own face turning pink in what George could only assume was his own shame. He quickly stood up, his eyes refusing to meet George's own as he shuffled to the spare desk next to him, "Sorry, I had no idea."

"Are you new?" George hummed, finally slipping into his chair with a relieved sigh. He paused, why the fuck was he still talking to this guy? Normally he'd just move on and pretend nothing ever happened, yet here he was making general conversation like he didn't normally try to avoid Alphas like the plague, "I don't think I've seen you before."

"Ah, no,- not to this school, at least," He winced, and George instantly felt guilty. He probably seemed like such an ass for not recognising him. The man backtracked at George's expression, sending him a comforting smile, "You're George, right? I've seen a few of your games."

"Yeah, I am. You know me?" It was George's turn to be confused this time, his eyes widening in subtle shock. He'd tried so hard to be unnoticeable that suddenly being acknowledged made him feel all weird inside. He turned on his computer when the teacher suddenly clapped his hands, signaling the start of class. George almost wished he hadn't, wanting to spend more time talking to the pretty stranger. Wait- *pretty*?

"You play with my best friend... Sapnap?" The guy whispered quietly, and George pretended that the low tone of voice he had didn't make him shiver, "He's super loud, annoying... constantly wearing a bandana?"

"Oh! Him," George blinked in realisation, images of the sparky man coming to mind. Sapnap was a good guy, super fun to play with and had a real drive to look after his teammates. George wasn't hesitant to admit that Sapnap was probably one of his favourites within their group, "He's cool. I don't really see him outside of practice, though. I'm guessing that's because he's always with you?"

"Sorry to keep him away." The blonde teased, his eyes sparkling lightly in amusement, "Yeah, he's normally with me and my group at lunch- or just in general."

"He's all yours." George teased back, his lips curving up into a smile. Internally, he was slapping himself across the face. He *really* needs to stop talking before he potentially gets found out. Outwardly, he tapped his finger against his desk, only half-listening to their teacher as he murmured to another question, "So, what's your name? I feel bad that it's taken me so long to ask."

"How about we just do introductions instead? Pretend I don't know who you are," The man grinned, holding his hand out for George to shake, "My name's Dream. I'm a Senior who got told to take this class thanks to my *sick* coding skills. I'm an Alpha, and in my free time, I like watching pretty boys play soccer. You?"

"Oh really?" George laughed quietly, covering his mouth with his free hand as the other curled around Dream's. Fuck, he was warm. George couldn't remember the last time he willingly touched someone other than Quackity, but those touches never felt so soft or intimate. He coughed, clearing his throat before speaking, "Well, I'm George. I'm a Senior with even *better* coding skills. I'm... a Beta, and in my free time I play soccer with your best friend."

"Nice to meet you, George." Dream's grin grew, and George slowly started to melt inside. How was it possible for one man to be so perfect? The hand covering his own squeezed slightly as he spoke, almost swamping George's own smaller one with how big it was. Christ, it shouldn't have been as hot as it was. George normally hated being smaller, constantly living in fear that someday it would be how he was found out.

Yet, Dream seemed to be the exception to lots of things when it came to George already.

"Nice to meet you too, Dream," George replied a little breathlessly, still stuck on the way Dream's hand fit against his own. He shook it off when the other man squeezed again, slowly retracting his hand as to not break the bubble of comfort he'd found himself in. With another small smile, George refocused in on the class, only mildly distracted by the way Dream's fingers flew across the keyboard.

The lesson passed by quickly, both boys only speaking a couple more times as they got absorbed in their work. Dream wasn't lying when he said he had skills, evidently shown as he matched George's coding pace. The two had found themselves in some kind of friendly rivalry, both silently wanting to see who could finish their work first. Unsurprisingly, it was George- making a show of cracking his knuckles as he sent in his work to the teacher.

He ignored the way he wanted to preen at Dream's shock from losing.

"No one's ever out-typed me before," Dream admitted after class, swinging his worn backpack onto his shoulder as he stood up. George could only marvel at how fucking *tall* he was, having to tilt his head back to meet Dream's eyes when sat down on his chair. He himself was an average height for an Omega male, resting at a comfortable 5'8, whereas Dream appeared to be an overachiever in terms of what an Alpha should be. He looked roughly 6'3, but George couldn't be sure without asking- which he definitely wasn't going to do.

He quickly stood up after him, trying to will away the humiliation he felt at their size difference. Dream didn't seem to notice, instead carrying on his rambling, "I should've expected to not be the best in this class, honestly, but it's hard to adjust to."

"Give it another year, young one," George mocked, stifling a chuckle at Dream's affronted expression. He'd learnt that Dream was a few months younger than him a few minutes prior, and planned to use the fact as a teasing point for as long as possible, "You'll catch up in no time."

"Oh, *trust* me when I say I will," Dream smirked cockily, bending down until they were face to face, "Get ready, *old man*, I'll make you eat your words when I overtake you before the years over."

"Uhuh," George rolled his eyes, barely holding back the flush that threatened to overtake his appearance at their closeness. He flicked Dream's nose, gently pushing past him with a light shove, "I'll believe it when I see it."

"Then I guess I'll have to make you." Dream called out after him, laughing loudly as George held up his middle finger in return.

It was going to be a *long* year.

X-X-X-X-X

Two week's worth of classes went by, and George only found himself growing closer to Dream.

The other man made him smile in a way that he hadn't in years, made every fibre of his being light up and set on fire in excitement. Talking to Dream felt new and exciting, and only made George more eager to attend school. He only had Comp-Sci on Monday, Wednesday and Friday- but he already cherished those days stronger than anything. He loved the subject itself anyway, yes, but the pretty blonde sitting next to him in it made it that much more enjoyable.

As much as he loved Quackity, because he did, it was nice to have another person he felt like he could call a friend.

The following week, Dream didn't attend any of their classes. George sulked through all of them, not even the thought of doing Python managing to cheer him up. On Friday, in an uncharacteristic Omega-like fashion, he got worried enough to ask Sapnap where Dream was at the end of a practice match. They'd never really talked about anything other than soccer before, so the embarrassment George felt at asking was almost crippling.

"Hey, Sapnap!" He called, effectively stopping the other from leaving the locker room. George fidgeted slightly at the attention, inhaling sharply before forcing himself to ask the damn question, "...D'you know where Dream is? He hasn't shown up to Comp class all week, and I don't have his number to text him."

Sapnap blinked in confusion, clearly trying to remember who exactly George was. Once he did, he let out a surprised snort, clapping George playfully on the shoulder, "Dude, he didn't tell you? He's in rut."

"Ah," George responded pathetically, his mind suddenly filling with *extremely* inappropriate images.

"You good, man?" Sapnap snorted again, though his eyes were tinted with light concern. He squeezed George's shoulder in a way that was meant to be comforting, sending him a light smile, "I didn't even know you two knew each other."

"Yeah! Yeah, I'm fine," George answered, voice a bit too loud and strangled to be considered normal. He hated his brain sometimes. Dream was a fucking *Alpha*, and only just *barely* his friend. He shouldn't be thinking about him like that, or anyone, for that matter. If he wanted to lead a normal life, he most likely could never be with anyone, much less intimately, "We sit next to each other. He's mentioned you to me a few times."

"Oh? What's he said?" Sapnap perked up, eyes glinting with mischief, "Go on, you can tell me. We're all friends here, right?"

"Hmm," George hummed, pretending to think. Would Dream get annoyed if he told him? He didn't *seem* like the type to get irritated at such petty teasing, but you can never really be sure, George sighed, his face filling with fake sympathy as he reached out to pet Sapnap's arm, "I'm afraid to say that he called you annoying. My deepest apologies, Sapnap."

"What a jerk." Sapnap chuckled light-heartedly, clearly not taking offence to what he'd said. His scent slowly increased its strength, making George step back a little warily. He hadn't noticed that Sapnap was an Alpha, which made him nervous. It meant that he was loosening up and forgetting

how careful he was meant to be, and that only spelt danger. Sapnap spotted his sudden anxiety, staring at his face with a worried frown, "Hey, what's wrong?"

"Nothing! I'm... I'm okay, honestly. I just remembered something," George stuttered, averting his own gaze up to the ceiling. He couldn't bear to see Sapnap's concern, as it would only increase the guilt crashing around in his stomach.

"Shit, I'm sorry. Did my scent trigger something in you?" Sapnap's scent suddenly turned dull and lifeless, the sparkiness drifting away into the air. George instantly looked back down at him, his heart squeezing painfully at Sapnap's crestfallen expression. The other man sighed, rubbing his scent gland almost nervously, "Some people have bad memories associated with my smell, y'know? I always forget to reign it in around Betas because it's usually not as noticeable to them."

Truthfully, George had never really noticed Sapnap's scent. Thanks to his suppressants, everything around him was somewhat dulled anyways. They could almost be compared to anti-depressants with the way that they controlled his emotions. Scents were duller unless he focused on them or they were brand new to him, and his emotions were kept suppressed so he didn't have an outburst and release his own smell. However, they really made him seem like a Beta, so he couldn't complain too much.

It was a pain to deal with sometimes though, especially with scenarios like this.

Sapnap smelt like ash and bonfires, a smokey scent that almost felt comforting to George. He took a deep breath of it in, smiling sadly once he realised why Sapnap would be concerned about his reaction to it. Omegas and occasionally Betas normally avoided fire-like scents due to the strength associated with them, the ash undertones smelling awful whenever an Alpha was feeling anything negative.

George, luckily, was not one of those people.

"Hey, your scent is fine, okay? Please don't worry about it," George hummed, moving in closer again as if to prove his point, "I actually kinda like it."

"You do?" Sapnap breathed, his eyes wide in surprise. Suddenly, he started beaming, stretching out to bring George into a tight hug, "Thank you, that makes me feel a lot better."

"Y-Yeah, of course," George murmured, twisting his arm to awkwardly pat Sapnap's back. It felt strange to be hugged, but would feel even worse to ask Sapnap to get off. The poor man clearly needed comforting after almost having to relive a bad memory, and who was George to deny him of it? Sapnap slowly calmed down, pulling back with a grateful smile.

George's train of thought gradually started to drift onto Dream again as he remembered his original purpose for seeking the younger man out, making him slow down his patting motion, "When will Dream be back?"

"Uh, normally his ruts are only a week, I think?" Sapnap furrowed his eyebrows thoughtfully as he moved out of the hug, "So he *should* be back on Monday. I'd give you his number to ask him yourself, but he's really protective of it- sorry."

"Don't be," George waved him off, smiling at him to show that he didn't mind. He'd be *pissed* if Quackity gave out his number without permission, after all, "I should probably get going, but thank you for your help."

"No worries, man," Sapnap chuckled, bending down to pick up his gym bag, "I'll see you on

Tuesday for practice."

George watched him walk away with a sigh of relief, his heart beating painfully in his chest as he mentally went through their conversation. He didn't say anything suspicious, did he? Whilst he liked Sapnap, he didn't trust him. *Yet* - his brain supplied unhelpfully. He couldn't help but notice that he was slowly starting to become closer with Dream compared to his normal soccer 'friends'.

The idea should've scared him, but instead, it only filled his body with a light warmth.

Speaking of, why did he care so much about Dream's disappearance? Quackity could leave for weeks at a time and George would only be mildly concerned- mostly due to the fact that the shorter man was normally hanging off of him like a leech. He'd barely known Dream for three weeks. less than a *month*, yet here he was pining over him like an infatuated little schoolgirl.

He couldn't help it, though. Dream almost felt like a drug, and George hated the thought of not taking him in. He'd grown accustomed to the comforting way Dream's scent wrapped around him in lessons, and missed the giddy feeling he'd get whenever the taller man smiled at him. Maybe George hadn't been sleeping enough? That was the only possible explanation- because there was *no* way that he was getting a... *crush*, especially on a goddamn *Alpha*.

George had gone seventeen years without liking anyone, and he wasn't about to break that streak for the pretty boy he'd met three weeks prior.

With that in mind, George spun on his heel, quickly racing home to take a well-deserved nap.

Chapter End Notes

thank you all again for reading! comments and kudos are super appreciated, but absolutely not necessary <3

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Chapter Summary

George finally gets to see Dream again, and a surprise proposition ends up leading to angst.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Just as Sapnap had said, Dream returned to school the following Monday.

They, unfortunately, had Comp-Sci first period that day, which meant that George would have to deal with a completely worn-out Dream all lesson. He couldn't say he minded much, though, excitement at seeing the younger man again overtaking any potential future frustration. Dream arrived exactly as the bell rang to signify the start of class, slamming the door shut behind him as he entered the room.

George watched with a grimace as the taller man all but threw himself into his desk chair, groaning in exhaustion as he buried his head into the cool wood beneath him. He hadn't even bothered to take his backpack off, instead letting it bash painfully against his back whenever he moved. George hadn't even managed to catch sight of his face when he came in, but he knew it probably wasn't a pretty sight.

Truthfully, George didn't know much about heats or ruts. He'd shut down his brain during Sex-Ed classes where it was mentioned, not wanting to be reminded of his own gender or the consequences that came with it. He wasn't close friends with any Alphas, and so had never really seen the effects that followed a rut in person either. Overall, he was clueless- and so had no idea how to help his lanky friend.

"Heyyy buddy," George grinned awkwardly, reaching over to gently grab Dream's bag and place it on the floor for him, "How're you holding up?"

"I want to *die*, Georgie," Dream moaned, turning his head to the side so he could look up at him, "I'm in so much pain."

George could finally see what kind of damage had been dealt after Dream moved his head, letting out a sympathetic wince as he checked him over. Dark purple eye bags had formed under Dream's eyes, blatantly obvious against the washed-out appearance of his skin. His eyes themselves were still slightly red, whether from being stuck in his Alpha state for so long or from frustrated crying, George couldn't tell.

Dream just seemed like a mess in general, to be honest. His normally shiny, soft-looking hair was slightly tangled and clearly unbrushed atop his head. He very obviously hadn't tried with his outfit for the day either, wearing a crumpled t-shirt and some loose grey sweats. George hated that he thought Dream still looked good anyway.

"That bad, huh?" George snorted, moving his hand over to pat his back supportively.

"You don't know the half of it," Dream sighed, the muscles on his back flexing at the small touch appreciatively, "You're so *lucky* that you aren't an Alpha or an Omega, man, it fucking *sucks*."

"Yeah, super lucky." George quickly bit back the frown that threatened to pop out. He looked down at his bag instead to hide it, eyes quickly narrowing in on the pouch at the front to spot the outline of his heat-suppressants. Ever since he'd turned sixteen, his dosage had to be increased to three times a day- meaning he had to take one at school too. They served as a miserable little reminder of his real second gender, but he'd rather have them be in his line of sight where he knew they were safe than have them shoved somewhere carelessly in his bag where they could get crushed or lost.

They sat in silence for a few moments as the teacher started the lesson, both trying to focus yet failing miserably. Dream was too tired to care, whereas George was still lost in his own head-nervous thoughts of heats and pills spiralling around his mind.

"...What's a rut like?" George asked quietly before he could stop himself, his eyes wide once he realised what he'd said. His hand flew off of Dream's back to cover his mouth, a blush rising to his cheeks in embarrassment, "Fuck, oh my god. I'm so sorry, I honestly didn't mean to-"

"Calm down, George, you're fine," Dream chuckled, still looking a little startled from the question. He slowly sat up straight, his eyebrows furrowing as he thought it over, "As you can see, they aren't exactly... *fun*. For mated pairs it's probably not as bad, but for solo guys like me? They're *hell*."

"But why?" George asked more hesitantly, embarrassment staying steady as he continued speaking, "It's just you getting off for a week, right? That can't be so bad."

"Imagine this," Dream hummed, waiting for George to nod in agreement, "It's like... when you feel like you really want something, and it's so close that you can almost *taste* it- but then you only get a glimpse of said taste and it's gone again. It would just leave you wanting more, right?"

George nodded again, nose scrunching up as he tried to picture it.

"Now imagine that scenario as me jacking off," Dream snorted loudly, his voice sounding pained as he spoke, "It feels good, yes, but the knowledge that there could be something better, more fulfilling out there prevents it from being fun. You're essentially just getting off, and then feeling unsatisfied over and over again for a week."

"Wow," George whistled, shaking his head slightly in disbelief. He was *never* getting off his stupid suppressants, then. If that was what it was like for an Alpha, how bad would it be for an Omega? He didn't even want to *imagine* how bad his first heat would be, "Yikes. That really sucks, man."

"Yup," Dream sighed, popping the 'p' to exaggerate his point, "The life of an Alpha can be tough, but you do what you gotta do."

"So dramatic," George teased, forcing back the remark that threatened to come out at Dream's words. Alphas had it the easiest out of *everyone*- so besides a once a month rut, what was there to complain about? Dream would never have to face the struggle of being forced to hide his second gender or the consequences that would occur if it was exposed. He couldn't say that to him, though, lest he gave himself away.

"You're such an idiot," Dream chuckled, the words coming out a lot fonder than he intended them to.

George giggled as Dream face-plated his desk again, knowing that their conversation was over. Part of him was disappointed, but he could recognise when to leave a tired man be. He focused his attention back on the lesson, subtly keeping an eye out for Dream (who was snoring unabashedly) as he half-listened to the teacher. How the man managed to sleep through the loud typing noises surrounding them, George would never know.

The minutes ticked by, and soon after George found himself shaking Dream awake. The younger man grumbled his complaints as he blearily sat up again, eye bags looking even darker from being woken up. George shut down both of their computers, waiting for Dream to pick up his bag before copying the action. He fully expected Dream to just walk off afterward, but instead was met with him fidgeting awkwardly in front of him still.

"You okay?" George raised an eyebrow, tugging the strap of his bag over his shoulder.

"Yeah! I'm fine, I just-" Dream groaned in embarrassment, averting his eyes momentarily. His gaze snapped back when he was hit with a sudden wave of confidence, staring at George determinedly as he asked, "Do you want to join my group for lunch? I know you've got your own friends and stuff, but it'd be cool to hang out with you a bit more."

"Oh-" George blinked, his cheeks very suddenly turning pink again, "Sure, that sounds... *cool*. Is it okay if I bring Quackity?"

"Yeah, yeah, of course," Dream quickly nodded. George could almost picture two floppy dog ears sprouting out from the top of his head at the action, "We sit near the back, next to the fire exit. If you can't see me, you'll *definitely* see Sapnap."

George could only nod back, still in a slight state of shock from the whole ordeal.

"Great, I'll see you there." Dream grinned, and just like that, he was gone.

George stayed frozen in the middle of their classroom, hand twitching by his side as he processed what had just happened. He'd never been invited to have lunch with someone before, much less a whole group. His current friends he sat with by default due to their shared love of soccer, not because they necessarily *wanted* to. George was by no means unpopular, but no one had ever actually bothered to invite him to stuff personally before.

He almost felt flattered.

George quickly whipped out his phone, thumbing through his apps until he found his texts with Quackity. His thumb hovered over the keyboard hesitantly, unsure of how to word his message without it being made a big deal. Eventually, he settled on something a little vague, hoping it would put the younger man off from asking him a shitload of questions.

You - Today at 12:02

we're eating somewhere diff today

meet me outside my comp class

Big Q - Today at 12:04

what

You - Today at 12:04

will explain when u get here

just hurry up

George sighed as he tapped out his final message, not bothering for a reply as he pocketed his phone. He could only hope that Quackity would be fine with the sudden change. If it came to it, he couldn't in good conscience pick Dream and his friends over his best friend. George moved out into the hallway, humming to himself as he waited.

Thankfully, Quackity only took an extra five minutes, appearing before him with a wide grin. He swung his arm around George's neck, forcing him to inhale his scent. George was quickly thankful that Quackity was a Beta, as the action would've been overwhelming if it was any other gender. He was *especially* thankful that the shorter man's scent was a pleasant one, smelling faintly like some kind of tropical fruit juice.

"Okay, what's with the sudden seating change?" Quackity raised an eyebrow in suspicion, letting go of him once George started squirming to get out of his grasp, "I've known you for three years, dude, and not *once* have you asked to eat somewhere else. You hate your routine being changed."

"I know," George grumbled, fixing his hair from where it got messed up in the headlock. "I just felt ready to... *mix* things up a bit, I guess. Is that bad?"

"What? Of course not, man," Quackity shot him an incredulous look. He sighed, rolling his eyes in a way that George knew could only be fond, "Forgive me for being worried, jackass. You've never asked to 'mix things up' before, I was just wondering why you suddenly were. If I knew you were okay with stuff like that, I would've changed where we sat ages ago."

"You don't like where we usually sit?" George frowned, a stab of guilt piercing through his stomach. It suddenly dawned on him that he'd ever really asked if Quackity was truly okay with sitting with his team, only ever *assuming* he was from the loud laugh he always had coming out his chest, "Shit, Q, I'm sorry-"

"Nah, don't be," Quackity waved him off, "Those guys are chill, I just know more... *entertaining* people, I guess. At least I can introduce them to you now."

"Sure..." George trailed off, not having it in him to tell him that this was most likely a one-time thing.

They walked in comfortable silence for a few minutes, navigating the hallways with the kind of ease that only a senior could have. They knew all the quick routes to different rooms, which stairwells would be the quietest and which corridors were the least crowded. Quackity knew everything about the school, it seemed, both about the people in it and the building itself.

"So, where are we sitting?" Quackity broke the quiet, abruptly standing still. George looked up in confusion, only to realise that they'd finally made it to the doors leading into the cafeteria, "In here? Or did you have somewhere else in mind?"

"In here," George motioned towards the door, fighting back a grimace as he continued speaking, "We're sitting with some people, actually."

"Oh?" Quackity blinked, looking genuinely surprised for once, "Who?"

"Dream, d'you know him?" George hummed, quickly freezing at the sudden smug look on Quackity's face. What the hell? He frowned, voicing his confusion, "What? Why are you looking at me like that?"

"No reason," Quackity hummed, smirking as he pushed past him to walk into the cafeteria. George trailed behind him obediently, confusion only growing when his friend seemed to navigate his way to Dream's table with practised ease. Thinking about it, Dream hadn't ever questioned who Quackity was whenever he spoke about him. Maybe they knew each other?

George watched in surprise as Quackity slid down onto one of the benches, making himself comfortable in between Sapnap and another boy he didn't recognise. His attention was quickly turned away from them at the sight of Dream, who was patting the seat next to him invitingly. He smiled softly, quickly plopping himself down onto it without complaint. George's nose ached slightly at the sudden burst of scents surrounding him, causing him to stay stood up for a moment to calm himself.

His gaze flitted around the table, taking in the appearance of everyone around him. There was Dream, obviously, as well as another boy, Sapnap, Quackity, and then the other stranger from before next to him. It was a pretty small assortment, but George could feel the difference in familiarity compared to the large group he normally sat with.

"Guys," Dream cleared his throat, coughing slightly as he tilted his head in George's direction subtly, "This is George- the guy from my Comp class that I told you all about?"

"Ah," The boy sat on Dream's other side nodded in realisation, smiling widely as he turned to face George, "Nice to meet you, then. My name's Bad."

"Yeah! It's great to finally meet the guy Dream's been-" The man he didn't recognise started, backtracking when Dream shot him a warning look, "A-Anyway, I'm Karl."

George flushed slightly at the attention, raising his hand to wave meekly. He was glad that he only had to meet two people, the idea of having to see even more making his chest ache anxiously. He shuffled a little closer to Dream, discreetly inhaling his scent as a way to comfort himself. Picturing a sandy beach was much easier to handle than his reality of being surrounded by unfamiliar people.

People equalled danger, and the more there were, the higher chance there was of his secret being found out.

Dream seemed to pick up on his sudden anxiety, leaning his body to the side so George could smell him a bit easier. Having your scent being considered comforting was one of the biggest compliments an Alpha could receive, as most were known for being blunt or aggressive. Sapnap's firey smell could be comforting to some, but also repulsive to others. Scents were similar to taste in the way that everyone preferences differed.

George looked up at him gratefully, taking another big breath of air before finally relaxing. The table broke out into loud chatter, everyone slowly starting to warm up to one another as they traded information and memories. It turned out that Quackity had been friends with Karl and Sapnap since before high school even started, to the surprise of both George and Dream.

Dream knew him briefly, having spoken to him a few times at the random house parties he bothered to show up to- but that was it. George grinned at the sight of his best friend looking so comfortable, feeling as though something inside him had slowly locked into place. This little group

just felt *right*, and George hated the thought of this one time being their only chance to sit with them.

Distracting himself from his thoughts, George looked over at Dream, only to find him slumped down onto the table tiredly. With a quiet laugh, he picked Dream's hoodie up from where it had been placed in between them earlier, quickly folding it into a makeshift pillow. He tapped him on the shoulder, forcing back the even louder laughter that threatened to bubble out at Dream's messy appearance.

"Wha-?" Dream lifted his head, staring at George in confusion. His eyes widened at the small cushion, staying still as George carefully placed it down on the table in front of him. He smiled at him sleepily, dropping his head down onto it with a content sigh, "Thank you."

"Of course." George smiled, watching as Dream drifted off to sleep again. It was unfair how pretty he was, even whilst knocked out. He didn't notice he himself was being watched until Quackity started coughing obnoxiously, quickly catching his attention, "What?"

"That was very... soft of you, man," Quackity hummed, gesturing towards the pillow, "Didn't know you had it in you."

"What do you mean?" George huffed, crossing his arms over his chest defensively. He could be soft! He just had to reign it in a lot more to prevent himself from being seen as having 'Omegan instincts.'

"Hey, there's nothing wrong with it!" Quackity quickly replied, holding his own hands out in a placating gesture. He relaxed when George started to calm down, carefully carrying on speaking, "You're not normally so... I don't know. Motherly? You're, like, the *furthest* thing from a mom friend actually."

"I don't know whether or not to be offended," George furrowed his eyebrows, ignoring how his chest panged in agreement at the shorter man's words. Something about Dream just drew him in, made him want to act like the side of himself he'd suppressed. It was scary and anxiety-inducing, but he just couldn't get himself to move away from him.

He knew he should, but the small part of his Omega that was left untouched by his pills hissed at the thought.

"Don't be," Sapnap snorted, watching Dream sleep with a fond smile, "That idiot never looks after himself, I'm glad he finally has someone who can help him out a 'lil."

"Yeah! Dream's *super* smart- but he can be an utter nimrod when it comes to self-care," Karl agreed, leaning his head onto Sapnap's shoulder as he shut down his phone, "It's good that he has someone like you."

"...Someone like me?" George repeated, his frown growing in even more confusion and nerves. He shuffled away from the unconscious man, refusing to meet the gaze of his friend's as he muttered, "We're just friends, okay? I'm just looking out for him like I would for any of you, I guess."

"No one's accusing you of anything," Quackity soothed, noticing his sudden uncomfortableness. His best friend was flighty at the best of times, and he'd hate for their potential opportunity to make better friends disappear just because he'd pushed George too much, "You're fine, man, just chill."

"Sure," George murmured, eyes briefly flicking towards Dream before continuing to stare at a

speck of dirt on the table, "Whatever you say."

The rest of lunch had been a relaxed, but slightly uncomfortable affair. George's mood had been marginally brought down at the light accusations, the urge to run away growing with each second. Quackity had ended up making most of the conversation, including George here and there before eventually giving up, his attention directing onto the other three boys at the table. He could only do so much for his socially awkward best friend.

The bell rang again after what seemed like an age, and George quickly shot up from his seat, bag already swung over his shoulder.

"Wait!" Karl shouted, smiling at him somewhat awkwardly, "Sit with us again tomorrow, yeah? It was great sitting with you guys."

George shot him a quick nod, neither agreeing nor denying as he all but raced out of the cafeteria. He needed to sort his emotions out and *fast*. No matter what, he couldn't risk his secret being found out. If it meant that he had to lose his new friends to protect it, he would. The notion squeezed his chest painfully, but he ignored it as he continued to speed his way out of the room.

George didn't even notice the way Dream had woken up at Karl's voice, or the way he watched him leave with a concerned yet longing look in his eyes.

Chapter End Notes

thank you all so much for reading, and for all of your support <33 it means the world to me

three

Chapter Summary

George and Sapnap have soccer practice, and then the gang head to the movies :]

After a long lecture from Quackity on 'letting himself relax for once', George agreed to sit with Dream and his friends again.

One time turned into three, and eventually, George found himself fully integrated into their new friendship group. He'd ditched his teammates from soccer and instead hung out with people who were interested in him despite the sport that he played. Quackity joined them too, obviously, always promising to stick by George's side no matter what. The two rarely got sappy with each other, but the notion made George's heart squeeze in gratitude anyway.

He spent a lot of his spare time worrying over it. Sitting with them shouldn't be as big of a deal as it was, any other normal person would be able to without a care in the world, But that was just it, wasn't it? George was normal, he was probably the furthest thing from it. He had so many secrets clogging up his little head that he had almost no room to give in and enjoy himself.

Dream's friends were great, and George knew deep down that none of them would intentionally hurt him. Sapnap was kind and seemingly didn't give two shit about gender or sexuality, or even dynamics. If you ignored his fiery scent, you could almost just pretend that he was a Beta instead of an Alpha. He was loud and funny, yet very obviously care more for his friends than anything else.

Karl seemed just as secretive as George, which actually gave him a sense of familiarity rather than wariness. Karl bounced off of Sapnap and Quackity with practised ease, which George later found out was because he was dating Sapnap and had been friends with Quackity for years. That fact alone made him more comfortable and eased any underlying anxieties George had about the younger man.

Bad was... well, he was just Bad. A general sweetheart who consistently looked out and cared for their little group. He disappeared a lot to meet one of his other friends- a boy called Skeppy who wasn't in any of George's classes and didn't really hang out with the people he knew either. George had a mild sense of trust for Bad within a week of sitting with them, giving him an instant win in George's book.

And then there was Dream.

George had never gotten along with someone, much less *liked* them as quickly as he did with Dream. He was an utter goofball and was constantly messing around, but you could very easily see the love and protectiveness he had for his friends if you looked past his humorous persona. He was soft when it mattered and would drop anything in a heartbeat if one of them needed something.

It also didn't help that George was very, very attracted to him.

He honestly couldn't help it, it was quite literally impossible *not* to be. Dream was the prettiest guy he'd ever seen, and his personality was even lovelier. George could barely make eye contact with

the poor boy because of how flustered it made him. Dream's eyes always seemed to be searching whenever they met George's, and the action made him nervous. Currently, Dream was the *last* person he'd want to find out about his second gender.

He couldn't risk losing someone like him.

As much as he loved it, being around Dream had its consequences, too. George's control on himself seemed to falter every time he was around the taller boy, making the tight grasp he had on his Omega threaten to slip. If it wasn't Dream's scent causing problems, it was his stupid smile or his wheezy little laugh. George was infatuated, and it was becoming dangerous.

x-x-x-x-x

A month and a bit of school had flown by, and George was already getting tired. The multitude of AP classes he was taking, alongside his home life and soccer practice after school was wearing him down. His friend group was one of the only things keeping him going, and he was more and more thankful to have them every day.

Sometimes, however, he wanted to kill them.

"George," Sapnap panted from next to him, laughing breathlessly as George let out a grunt in response, "C'mon man, match's over."

George was lying face down on a bench outside their school's gym, body aching from the strain he'd put on himself during practice. First, they'd decided to childishly race to the locker areas. He may not be very strong, but fucking *hell* George could run when he really wanted to. He'd arrived in the changing rooms several minutes before Sapnap, leaning against their lockers smugly as though he himself wasn't struggling to breathe.

They'd then raced to see who could get changed faster, almost falling over in their attempts to pull on their gym shoes. From there they'd challenged one another to see who could reach the field first, and then to see who could score the most goals during practice. His teammates had just watched them both in amusement, yet surprised and mildly confused at how close they both seemed to be.

George hadn't ever really looked so carefree before.

"Go away," George groaned, burying his face further against the cold metal table. He felt someone tugging at the back of his shirt, making him whine weakly as he tried to brush him off, "Let me die in peace... *please* Sap."

"Not Sap," A voice giggled, making George shoot up in surprise. He was funny about people touching him at the best of times, much less a random person he didn't recognise when he was weak and worn out. He turned around, hand flinging up to cover the scent gland on his neck as he looked up, eyes wide in shock. He let out a sigh of relief when he realised who it was.

"Karl," George huffed, letting his hand slowly fall from his neck. He didn't notice the way suspicious Karl eyed the action, "Don't sneak up on me like that. You *know* how I feel about surprises."

"Yeah, you and me both," Karl nodded slowly, his face unreadable. George raised an eyebrow in confusion at his expression, but the taller man just waved him off with a tight grin, "Ready to go? We gotta leave now if we want to make it on time."

"Huh?" George blinked, confusion only deepening, "Where are we going?"

"Dude, seriously?" Sapnap snorted from his place next to Karl, his hand not so discreetly winding around his waist, "You said you'd come to the movies with all of us. Dream brought your ticket and everything, remember?"

Ah, George had agreed to something like that. Shortly after officially joining their friend group, they'd all exchanged numbers and promptly made a private group chat. The night before last, Karl had blown it up talking about a new movie he wanted to see, and nobody except George could say no to him. Dream had all but begged George to go, offering to even buy his tickets and any snacks he wanted if he agreed.

In a moment of pure simping and exhaustion, George had said yes.

"Right," George smiled awkwardly, quickly standing up from his seat. He brushed off his shorts, swinging his bag over his shoulder before making a moving motion with his hand, "So, ready to go then?"

"Aren't you going to get cold dressed like that?" Karl frowned in concern, looking George's outfit up and down. George normally never got changed after practice, usually heading straight home where he showered and then had a nap. He was only wearing a pair of shorts that barely scraped his knees, and a thin training shirt on his torso.

"I'll be fine," George hummed, quickly brushing his concern off. Thanks to his pills and being an Omega in general, George ran a lot colder than most. That was part of the reason he rushed home so fast, he constantly needed warming up. He couldn't tell his friends that without raising suspicion, though, and so forced himself to lie, "I normally stay pretty warm, so."

"If you say so," Sapnap shrugged, tightening his arm around Karl's waist as he started leading them both towards his car, "Dream, Bad and Q are all going in Dream's car since they finished earlier, so we'll meet them there."

"Sure," George replied, trying not to make himself look any more awkward. He could feel Karl's eyes on him as they walked but tried to pass it off as wariness over his clothing. Karl couldn't know, there was just no possible way. They slid into Sapnap's car in comfortable silence, George quickly hopping in the back so that Karl could sit upfront with his... boyfriend?

Honestly, George had no clue *what* they were. He'd tried asking Dream about it in Comp Sci once, but the taller man was just as lost as he was. Apparently, they were definitely something, but also nothing at the same time. It was seriously confusing, and even thinking about it for a few moments had George's head spinning. They were happy with each other, though, and that was all that really mattered.

"You good, man?" Sapnap hummed, his eye meeting George's in his rearview mirror. They'd been driving for at least ten minutes, and George hadn't said a word, too lost in his own head. Sapnap chuckled at his quizzical expression, "You're being a lot quieter than normal today."

"Hm? Yeah, I'm fine." George startled, smiling in a way that he hoped looked apologetic. He fidgeted with his fingers on his lap, tangling them together before letting them go repeatedly, "Just thinking. I'm sorry for making you worry."

"Nah, it's chill," Sapnap snorted, turning his attention back onto the road, "What're you thinking about so hard anyway? I can literally see those rusty cogs in your head turning."

"You're so dumb," George grinned, letting out a genuine little laugh, "I dunno, I think this is my first time going to the movies with friends. The most I did with my old group was go to parties- and

even then I just hung out with Q, y'know? This is all so new to me."

"Well if it makes you feel any better, you're doing great," Karl turned around to smile at him warmly. He laughed at the responding eye roll George shot him, "Really! You're a natural at social interaction."

"Oh my God, shut up," George grinned again, laughing at the faux-offended look Karl gave him in return. His cheeks turned a little pink at the compliment, some of the anxiety that had been plaguing his heart lifting a little, "Thank you, though."

Karl nodded at him, giggling slightly at George's reaction. The rest of the car ride was spent in mindless chatter, conversation topics ranging from soccer to math class. The movie theatre was quite far away, the small town they lived in not really having much to offer except a few fast-food restaurants and beaches. Another twenty minutes went by and they were there, all three boys laughing at something Sapnap had said as they clambered out of his car.

They made their way into the theatre, still lightly messing around as they walked in through the sliding doors. George abruptly stopped when he caught sight of Dream's messy blonde hair, not seeing the smug little smirks Sapnap and Karl shot each other at his sudden silence. With a shout, Sapnap caught the other three boy's attention, quickly making them walk over.

"Jeez, took you guys long enough," Dream teased, his green eyes twinkling underneath the cinema lights. Unsurprisingly, being away from the fluorescent lights belonging to their school made him look even prettier. He was dressed extremely casual, a pair of jeans and a jacket over a fitted white t-shirt, yet George thought eh was stunning anyway, "Crash on the way here again, Sap?"

"Shut up, dude, that was once and you know it," Sapnap scowled, though the hidden tones of his own amusement rang through in his voice, "Nah, George just forgot and made us late."

"Sapnap!" George hissed, his cheeks flushing a bright red in embarrassment.

Dream didn't seem to mind, though, letting out a loud wheeze as he turned his attention on to George. He forced on a fake pout, batting his eyelashes dramatically as he moved to drape himself over George's shoulders, "You forgot about me, Georgie? After that promise you made? I'm hurt, really."

"No! No, I didn't-" George quickly shook his head, speech trailing off as his body turned frozen at the feeling of Dream on him. Fuck, he was warm. George almost wanted to purr at the sensation, subconsciously feeling the urge to snuggle further under Dream's long arm. He couldn't though, huffing in barely concealed disappointment as he shoved Dream off, "You're such an idiot."

"Just for you," Dream cooed, taking the hint as he stepped away. George automatically missed the warmth he gave him. The group stood around a little longer, chatting as they waited for Quackity and Bad to return from the bathrooms. Eventually, they came back, bringing their tickets and various snacks (that they quickly all split between the group) with them.

The movie choice was a mystery to all of them except Karl, making them enter the screen with apprehension. They moved into their row in order, seated with Bad at the front followed by Quackity, then George and Dream before ending with Sapnap and Karl. Sapnap willingly went along with whatever his lover(?) wanted, and Bad was too nice to complain- but the other three quickly started to rant about the quality within the first five minutes.

"Karl, what the fuck possessed you to make you willingly want to watch this movie?" Quackity groaned quietly, grabbing a handful of popcorn from George's bucket, "It's so bad, man, so

fucking bad."

"Language!" Bad hissed quietly- looking extremely affronted by his curse-filled comment. His friends just ignored him, returning to their movie slander discussion as though they hadn't even heard him. He was too used to their unfazed reaction, rolling his eyes in fond annoyance as he moved to drink from the Diet Coke next to him.

"I like it," Karl frowned, quickly smiling again when Sapnap's arm curled around his shoulder, "Just look past the... animated characters, and it's fine!"

"Can this conversation wait until *after* the movie?" Dream hissed, mouthing an apology as the man in the row in front of him turned around to glare at them.

The group fell silent again at that, but was unable to stay quiet for long as another awful action sequence played out on screen. Quackity and Sapnap were laughing obnoxiously, uncaring to the people around them as they watched one of the side characters get squashed by a dinosaur. Karl was pouting at them, trying to cover Sapnap's mouth with his hand to shut him up.

Bad was sighing into his hand, both at the people he was sat with and the movie itself. The film didn't even make any sense and was giving all the sane members of their group headaches. Dream just sighed and rolled his eyes, trying to slurp from his almost finished drink as quietly as possible. He did *not* feel like dealing with the man in the seat in front of him's glare again.

George was just... zoning out. He was sat on the side closest to Dream's scent gland, and his warm, beach-like smell was enveloping him like a blanket. It made him feel all gooey inside, melting his insides until he was a pile of mush. If you asked him what had happened within the last thirty minutes of the movie, he genuinely would not be able to tell you.

His hand mindlessly dipped inside his popcorn bucket, freezing at the feeling of somebody else's already in it. Dream turned to stare down at him curiously, his own hand twitching where it was over George's as if asking for permission. Wordlessly, and without knowing what he was agreeing to, George gradually started to nod, his mouth agape as he looked down into the bucket.

Carefully, Dream grabbed George's hand, slowly intertwining their fingers as he moved their joint palms onto his seat's armrest. Dream looked appeased at this, shooting him a cocky half-smirk before turning his attention back to the movie. George just froze in place again, his jaw still dropped as his eyes burned holes into their hands.

Heat travelled up and around George's body, coursing through his veins like a drug as he relaxed back into his chair. Somehow, his mind turned even foggier, letting him sink into the plush seat without a care in the world. God, he was touch-starved. He should've been more aware, more *cautious* of how the small action could've made his scent leak, the overwhelming emotions he felt almost bypassing his scent-blockers altogether.

But in the moment, he couldn't find it within himself to care.

Dream's thick thumb was brushing over George's knuckles softly, distracting him from any alarm bells trying to ring in his head. George wanted to cuddle in even closer, maybe even rest his heavy head on Dream's shoulder, but the few remaining parts of rationality in his brain managed to stop him before he could. At some point, At some point, Dream had focused his own attention back onto their hands, watching the way George shivered slightly each time his thumb dipped in between the grooves of his knuckles.

Dream's scent was getting warmer the happier he got, and it certainly wasn't helping George come

back out of the fog in his brain, either. He barely even registered the end of the movie, or the gentle tug Dream gave to his hand as he helped him to his feet.

"You okay?" Dream murmured, letting go of his hand to pick up George's rubbish for him. George instantly mourned the loss, barely able to force back the whimper that threatened to come out. Fuck, he needed to leave. If he stayed any longer he was almost *certain* that his suppressants would become inactive and force him into his first heat right then and there.

"Yeah," George slowly nodded, hurriedly trying to beat away the foggiest as he came back to himself. He nodded a little more insistently, not noticing the way Quackity was stood behind him, watching the interaction with concern. His hand lowered to rest on the small of George's back, gently guiding him forward in a reassuring manner.

"Hey man, you ready to go home?" Quackity hummed, keeping his voice low and calming as if sensing George's panicked thoughts, "You can sleep round mine again if you want."

"I'm good," George inhaled, spinning around to smile at him reassuringly, "I have homework and shit to do anyway."

"Jesus Karl, you're never picking the movie again-" Sapnap started to complain seconds later, quickly dragging everyone out of their thoughts. The conversation turned light-hearted again as they all became distracted, arguing back and forth over the film and how bad it was in general. Karl, for some reason, actually ended up enjoying it- which made Quackity and Sapnap gag in disgust.

"There's something wrong with you," Quackity grimaced, inching away from Karl as though there actually *was* a problem with him. Karl jumped on top of him in retaliation, his fingers digging into Quackity's ribs to tickle him in a way that looked painful. They continued messing around until they were outside the theatre, the night air significantly cooler than the warm breeze that had been present during soccer practice. George shivered, his arms crossing over his chest as if to protect himself from the cold.

"Here," Dream quickly picked up on the action, shrugging off his thick jacket to place it around George's shoulders. The sight almost made him growl possessively, the oversized article of clothing all but swamping George's smaller figure. The shorter man was staring up at him wide-eyed, his hands coming out from under the jacket to tug the edges of it to the center of his chest.

"Oh... thanks," George laughed a little breathlessly, unable to stop himself from burrowing into it with flushed cheeks and a content sigh. Dream didn't seem bothered by the cold weather, the heat radiating from his body only intensifying in an attempt to warm him up. As if sensing it, George shuffled a little closer to him, Dream's warmth quickly flowing into him.

Karl, Quackity, and Sapnap stopped horsing around as they witnessed their interaction, exchanging looks between themselves and Bad. Karl nodded at Sapnap personally before shuffling over toward George's other side. Quackity looked between them both, analyzing every small movement as if trying to decipher some big secret. It was no surprise to any of them that Dream and George were attracted to one another, but the odd way George was acting made him feel slightly worried and suspicious.

"Ready to go?" Karl asked gently, patting George's back as if understanding something. He and Sapnap were giving George a ride home, as Sapnap lived only a few minutes away from him and Karl was staying over.

"Yeah," George smiled, poking one of his hands out to wave goodbye to their friends as Karl lead

him back over to Sapnap's car. He once again didn't notice the way Dream was watching him leave, green eyes locked onto his form with an unreadable emotion as his own cheeks pinkened slightly.

four

Chapter Summary

George does something stupid- but it seems to work out in the end anyway.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The car ride home was quiet.

Karl had been sending George undecipherable looks through the rearview mirror, and Sapnap was too concentrated on driving in the dark to make any decent conversation. George couldn't find it within himself to care that much, too absorbed in the feeling of Dream surrounding him and clogging up his senses. His warm scent was curling around him almost protectively, battling off the cold as well as any negative emotions he could've been feeling.

"Hey," Karl hummed after a few more minutes of staring, "D'you mind if we talk really quick before we drop you off?"

"Sure... I guess," George frowned anxiously, pushing his nose a little more firmly into the collar of his jacket, "Am I in trouble?"

That made Karl snort in amusement, Sapnap tuning into the discussion at the sound of his laugh. Karl quickly assured George that no, he was not 'in trouble', and they made light chatter the rest of the ride home. At one point, Sapnap flicked on his car radio, belting out the lyrics to some Britney Spears song uncaringly loud until another car driving next to them joined in on the singing.

Times like this made George so fucking grateful to have met these idiots.

Eventually, the fun came to an end, and Sapnap pulled into George's driveway. George clambered out the car tiredly, tugging the edges of Dream's jacket together to protect his front from the sudden cold air surrounding him. Karl got out after him, placing a soft kiss on Sapnap's cheek before shutting the door behind him. He walked George up to his front door, only stopping once George had safely gotten inside.

"I just wanted to say that you can talk to me, y'know?" Karl started, giving him such a soft look that George himself started to feel concerned, "I'm here for you, man. You can trust me with anything."

George could only stare back at him in surprise, letting out a nervous little chuckle as he tried to wave away the sudden seriousness in Karl's voice. Where the hell was all of this coming from? As far as he could tell, George hadn't done or said anything that was a cause for concern within the past day- at least, he didn't *think* he had. He didn't have the heart to tell his friend that, though, as he didn't want to make Karl seem all paranoid or something.

"I'm okay, honestly, but thank you," George nodded slowly, his eyebrows furrowed slightly in confusion, "The same goes for you too, obviously."

"I know," Karl smiled a little sadly. He shook his head, forcing on a grin as he started making his way back towards Sapnap's car, "Just keep that in mind, alright?"

"I will," George murmured, watching as Karl got back inside the car. He waved them goodbye, waiting until they've driven away before shutting his front door behind him. He'd reevaluate that entire situation later, but for now, all he wanted to do was sleep.

-X-X-X-X-X-

George was dumb- so, so fucking dumb.

A week had gone by since their group's little movie outing and he still hadn't returned Dream's jacket. He'd honestly just forgotten to do it at first- but the longer the item was in his possession, the more attached he'd grown to it. George knew it was wrong to purposefully keep one of his friend's belongings like that, yet the idea of returning it felt even worse.

He hadn't done anything creepy with it! Hell, he hadn't even worn it since he got home the night of the movie. The warm article of clothing had been draped safely over the back of his desk chair, and he hadn't touched it once. George secretly just loved the way it made Dream's scent seep into his room slightly, filling the normally neutral smelling air into something akin to a warm summers day.

If he thought about it hard enough, he could almost picture Dream sat on his chair instead.

George had every intention of giving it back to him... eventually. Most likely whenever his scent had worn out and was replaced with George's own. The image made his nose wrinkle in disgust, hating how bland everything related to him was. He knew it was essential to keep his cover, however, and would much rather live a plain life than have his biggest secret exposed.

Sometimes he couldn't help but wonder what his own true scent would be like.

Would it be something soft and sweet? Some of the girls at school smelt of predictable things like marshmallows or various other types of sweets. Occasionally George would meet some that had more confusing scents such as different types of flowers or something perfumey. George didn't really like them, personally, and hoped he'd have something that wasn't too overwhelming like theirs were.

The Sunday night before school was filled with dreams of his real identity. He pictured his friends finding out what he really was, their mortified faces as his scent suddenly exploded across the cafeteria like a crashing wave. In all honesty, it was more of a nightmare than a dream. They'd been awful enough to make him wake up late, having been stuck in his sleep well after his alarm had gone off.

George lived alone most of the time, which could be considered both a blessing and a curse. His parents (after finally being assured that George would be fine without them) had both gotten jobs that required travelling throughout the country, and so were rarely ever home. It made mornings like these harder to deal with, as he had no angry mother to wake him up when he slept in or father to drive him to school.

The minute George's emergency alarm had gone off, he threw himself out of bed, his eyes wide in panic as he sprinted into his bathroom. He managed to shower in under five minutes, brushing his teeth and washing his face whilst still under the scorching hot water. Afterwards, he'd *thankfully* remembered to down the pills laid out on his sink. George didn't even think about his outfit as he careered back into his room, changing into the first few pieces of clothing he saw before grabbing his bag and racing out the house.

George, being the absolute idiot that he was, had somehow pulled on Dream's jacket in the process

of getting ready.

He didn't register what he'd done at first, not noticing the strange looks he got as he rushed through the school corridors. George only came to a stop when he reached his locker, eyes darting up to the clock just above them before shoving his unnecessary items inside. With a loud slam, he shut it again, turning on his heel as he ran to his Comp-Sci class.

George pulled open the door with a relieved cry, the bell signalling the start of class ringing behind him. He'd made it. His teacher glared at him out the corner of his eye, making George mutter a meek apology before shuffling over to his seat. He didn't see the incredulous expression on Dream's face, nor the curious stares of his fellow classmates.

Feeling Dream's eyes burning holes through the side of his head, George turned around on his seat. He raised an eyebrow in confusion, "Good morning to you too, Dream."

"You-" Dream stammered, blinking almost frantically as he not-so-subtly checked out George's outfit, "You're wearing... huh?"

"What?" George frowned, his own gaze slowly turning downwards to stare at himself. He was wearing a regular pair of jeans, one of his more-worn hoodies and a jacket. What was so wrong with that- Wait, jacket? George slowly processed what was going on, the collar of Dream's jacket brushing up against his nose in a painful reminder. His face suddenly turned a very bright red, "Oh-oh *fuck*. Dream I swear it's not what it looks like-"

"You're wearing my jacket," Dream interrupted, his voice sounding somewhat choked, "Holy shit, George, you're wearing *my* jacket."

"I know," George groaned, burying his face in his hands. God, this was fucking embarrassing. The idea of Dream asking why he hadn't returned it yet genuinely made him want to electrocute himself with his laptop. At least if he was dead the taller man couldn't question him. George whined into his hands, voice muffled by his palms, "I'm so sorry, it was seriously an accident. Here, I'll take it off and you can just put it in your locker or something during break, okay?"

"No!" Dream suddenly shouted, causing the entire class to turn and stare at him in shock. He slapped his hand over his mouth, waiting for them to all spin back around before continuing in a much quieter tone, "Just... keep it on, okay? It suits you- fuck, it *really* suits you."

George gaped at him in shock, his fingers clutching the edges of the fabric tightly. Dream... didn't mind? Truthfully, George didn't want to take the jacket off at all. It was warm as *hell*, heating up George's insides like a crackling bonfire. Dream's scent slowly sunk through the thick material into George's skin, making it feel as though the younger man had put some sort of invisible claim on him.

George *loved* it. Having it placed somewhere in his room was nowhere near as amazing as having it *on* him.

"Are you sure?" George frowned, eyes searching Dream's own for any sign of hesitance or unsureness. When he found none, he let his hands fall from the jacket, nuzzling back into it with a relieved sigh. It was crazy how in such a short amount of time, he'd managed to be able to understand his friend's feelings from their expressions alone, "Thank you."

"Of course," Dream murmured a little breathlessly, "Anything for you."

George didn't even hear him, too caught up in fighting back the purr that threatened to come out at

the expressed permission to wear Dream's clothes. A nagging voice in the back of his mind started telling him that he was falling too far, that he'd only get himself hurt or his secret exposed- but he was too far gone to care at the moment.

Class preceded as usual, except for the silence that overtook the normally loud pair of friends. Dream was too busy gawking at George to think of anything remotely interesting to say, whereas George was content to bury his face in the jacket and never speak again. The teacher droned on about various homework assignments and grades, oblivious to the forming tension in between his best students.

"Dream," George hummed, slowly being brought out of the foggy haze he'd fallen into. The class had started chatting noisily again as the teacher stopped talking, forcing George out of the quiet, comfortable headspace he'd been in. He chuckled at Dream's flustered expression, voice lilting into a teasing tone, "You're staring at me."

"Yeah..." Dream nodded dazedly. He snapped out of it when he heard George's laugh, rubbing the back of his neck sheepishly, "Shit, sorry, I zoned out for a little there."

"You're fine," George brushed his apology off, lifting his head out from the collar of the jacket to smile at him teasingly, "Just thought you might've gone braindead or something with how out of it you looked."

"Oh, fuck off," Dream snorted. He shuffled on his chair until he was facing George properly, not even noticing his laptop shutting down in front of him from inactivity. George turned to face him back, his smile growing into a grin at their usual banter, "I was just thinking, that's all."

"Didn't know you were capable of doing that, to be honest," George hummed, voice laced with amusement. When Dream remained uncharacteristically quiet, George let out a questioning hum, tilting his head to the side to show he was listening, "You okay? You really do seem... I don't know, confused?"

"What's with the glasses?" Dream replied after a moment, raising his hand to gesture towards the thick goggles covering George's eyes. Dream paused when he realised how direct his question had been, backtracking slightly to ease the potential offensiveness of it, "Not that there's anything wrong with them! I guess I just realised that I've never seen your eyes before."

Well, shit.

George honestly should've expected the question to arise sooner rather than later. After all, he'd been blessed with some unfortunately nosey friends. Quackity had questioned him about them once during their first year but quickly backed off once he noticed George's hackles rise. He'd shown him since then obviously, but even still Quackity himself had only seen his eyes a few times.

George couldn't exactly tell Dream the truth, either. That would just straight out give him and his secret away. Quackity had never asked why, instead only wondering about what his eyes looked like rather than why he wore the glasses in the first place. He could tell the partial truth- could say that he was just insecure about his eye colour and preferred to keep them hidden.

His eyes without the influence of his secondary gender were weird enough for the excuse to work anyway.

George was born with heterochromia, specifically one chocolate brown eye and one icy blue. His parents had always told him that they were pretty, something that should make him feel special and unique- but he already felt that x10 when he found out he was a male Omega of all things. The last

thing George wanted was to stand out even more for something he couldn't control.

"Uh," George floundered, trying to think of the best possible response. He eventually settled on a half-truth, half-lie, "I don't like my eyes. They're just a bad reminder of bad times, I guess? I've always been kind of insecure about them."

"Really?" Dream frowned in concern. Carefully, he reached out his hand, his fingers lightly resting on the bottom of George's glasses, "...Can I see them?"

George's lips parted in shock, his head subconsciously tilting forward to lessen the strain on Dream's arm. Part of him was terrified- what if they suddenly flashed gold and gave him away? Granted, his eyes hadn't actually changed into his Omegan colour since before he'd started high school, but the fear was always there and the possibility that they *could* was very real.

Ever so slowly, George nodded- his eyes screwing shut automatically as his glasses were hesitantly lifted up to rest on the top of his head. He felt Dream's thumb swipe softly under his right eye, coaxing them open in the most tender way possible. With a shaky inhale he opened them up, his gaze immediately flicking to the side so he wouldn't have to see Dream's expression. The quiet gasp the taller man let out was enough for George to decipher his reaction anyway.

"George," Dream hummed, his large hand gently moving down to cup his cold cheek, "Can you look at me, please?"

Unable to ignore the warm touch to his face or the pleading tone in Dream's voice, George shyly looked back at him. Dream's expression was *not* what he was expecting. The younger man was staring at him in something akin to awe, his own gaze locked onto George's as though it would kill him to glance away for even a moment.

In the few months George had known Dream, he hadn't ever seen him look so entranced by something before.

"It's weird, I know," George muttered, fighting back the urge to look away again at the prolonged eye contact. A light flush rose to his cheeks in embarrassment at Dream's silence, his body shifting uncomfortably at the weird tension that had been surrounding them ever since his glasses had been taken off, "If you let go I can put my glasses back on and-"

"God, you don't even know how pretty you really are, do you?" Dream murmured softly. His fingers lowered once more to trail down the expanse of his jaw, stopping only to lightly grip George's chin to tilt up his head, "You're fucking *beautiful*, George- everything about you is just... *hypnotic*."

"Dream..." George whispered, his eyes widening and his cheeks suddenly burning a bright red in surprise. As if in a trance, he leant into Dream's touch, forcibly fighting back the purr that threatened to come out at the compliments and kind affection.

Just as George opened his mouth to say something else, the bell rang noisily behind them- signalling the end of class. The two boys sprung apart as if burnt, looking anywhere but at each other. They packed up their things in tense silence, flushing in embarrassment anytime they made eye contact for even a second. Eventually, Dream cleared his throat, fiddling with his bag strap nervously.

"Fuck, listen, I'm sorry if I crossed a boundary or something-" Dream babbled, his fiddling growing a little more apparent the more anxious he got, "Or made you uncomfortable, I guess. I just-"

"Dream," George interrupted, holding his hand up as if to pause him. He shot Dream a shaky smile, using the same hand to flick his glasses back down onto the bridge of his nose, "Did you mean it? What you said to me earlier?"

"Of course," Dream frowned, "Every word. You're perfect, George."

"Then it's fine," George smiled a bit more genuinely this time, ignoring the way his words made him want to melt inside. He shrugged his shoulders to give off an air of nonchalance, "It's just two... *homies* exchanging nice words, right? We're cool."

"Yeah, we're cool." Dream huffed, his frown only growing deeper. When George said nothing else, he forced out a neutral sounding hum, "Listen, I've gotta head to Calculus. I'll see you at lunch later?"

"Of course!" George chuckled shakily, "See you then."

With that, George spun on his heel, speedily walking out of the classroom in an attempt to calm down his furiously beating heart. Fuck, this wasn't good. He could feel his inner Omega whining loudly within his head, wanting nothing more than to turn back around and leap into Dream's arms. The whining only got louder the further away he got from their classroom, his Omega eventually all but screaming in an attempt to get him to go back.

"Shut up, shut up, shut up-" George hissed to himself, ignoring the weird stares he got as he marched into one of the bathrooms. He bent down over one of the sinks, quickly turning on the tap before splashing cool water onto his cheeks. Fuck, he was so, so close to slipping back there. He would've accidentally revealed his biggest secret to his entire Comp-Sci class just because Dream called him *pretty* of all things.

Dream had called him *pretty*.

The words rang around his head like a mantra, the firm yet soft tone of voice Dream had whilst saying it wrapping around him like a blanket. They reverberated in his bones, encasing his thoughts and slowly calming down both his Omega and his own busy brain. Not only had Dream said it, but he *meant* it. Did that mean he liked him back?

The thought made George smile sadly. Even on the off chance that Dream did like him too, he wouldn't be able to do anything about it. He'd sworn off dating the minute he presented as an Omega, and he couldn't break that rule just so he could be with him. As much as he liked Dream (which was a whole fucking lot), he liked his life as a Beta more. With a resigned sigh, George lifted his head from the sink, blinking back the tears that threatened to drip down onto his glasses.

He can do this.

George picked back up his bag, briefly fixing his hair in the mirror and adjusting Dream's jacket before running out of the bathrooms. He was late enough to his next lesson as it was, and if he wanted to keep up the Beta act, he couldn't let his reputation slip. Just one more year and he'd be out of this school forever- and he'd never have to worry about shit like this again.

Fake it till you make it, right?

god this chapter was such a pain to write xD i actually like how it turned out in the end, though. the slow burn itself is difficult- so I'm kinda worried I'm making them move too fast, y'know? oh well :]

five

Chapter Summary

George is jealous, we get a bit of Karl, George and Sap lore, new characters are introduced and Sapnap is a Good Friend.

Chapter Notes

hi everyone!!

just a quick TW warning here! this chapter talks briefly about homophobia and a general disliking of gay people. nothing graphic is said to anyone and is only discussed fleetingly between sap and george themselves :) if this might hurt or trigger you, please skip the story from the final 'x-x-x-x-x'. it is important plot-wise, but i can do a recap in the comments for anyone who needs it!

stay safe, and i love you all <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The previous events left George dealing with a whirlwind of emotions throughout his next few classes.

Whilst George was by no means uncomfortable with what Dream had said, he was still in a mild state of anxiety from the whole 'almost slipping' thing. He had been way too close to giving in to his Omega. George didn't blame Dream at all for what had almost happened, as he started it by letting the taller man take off his glasses in the first place.

During his final class before lunch, he let himself get fully absorbed in his thoughts. George promptly came to the realisation that while it hadn't been Dream's fault, it was undeniable that George's attraction to him is what almost caused his reveal. The closer he got to the younger man, the likelier it was that he'd accidentally reveal himself. The thought of avoiding Dream physically hurt his heart- but he'd do what he had to do to protect himself.

It didn't help that he was wearing Dream's jacket still. Winter was swiftly approaching and it was *way* too cold for him to take the article of clothing off. The jacket only served as a souvenir of everything that had happened, Dream's warm scent clinging to him in a painful reminder of a love that he could never have. Even still, George couldn't stop himself from burying his nose into the soft fabric, letting the scent soothe him through greedy inhales.

George barely even registered the end of class, too lost in his own head to recognise the sound of the bell ringing in front of him. A nudge to the shoulder from an old soccer 'friend' is what eventually pulled him out of it, shaking his head quickly to dispel his thoughts. He politely smiled in greeting at his teammate before standing up, his bag clumsily whacking the small of his back as he swung it over his shoulder.

With Dream's jacket and his heavy bag weighing him down, he slowly made his way out of the classroom.

x-x-x-x-x

Lunch, as you probably could imagine, was an awkward affair.

George was the last person to arrive at their usual table thanks to the speed at which he'd left class. His friends were sat like normal, chatting and messing around as they usually were. Nothing was out of the ordinary, and that made him discreetly sigh in relief. So long as everything was the same, then everything was fine- right? Dream clearly hadn't told them about what had happened during Comp-Sci, as none of the men around him looked remotely tense or concerned.

"George!" Quackity shouted, instantly capturing everyone's attention. George instantly froze from where he'd been awkwardly standing, head snapping to face him in surprise. Quackity just raised an eyebrow at his odd behaviour, chuckling slightly as he said, "You gonna stand there like a loser for the whole of lunch? C'mon man, just sit down already."

"Shut up," George snorted back. This was familiar territory, he could handle this. He hesitantly approached their table, ignoring the holes burning into the side of his head from the intensity of his friend's stares. George looked at his normal seat beside Dream, barely holding back a wince as he realised it'd be going against what he'd thought about earlier.

It would be even worse, however, if Dream and their friends thought something was up with him and tried to pry into it.

With that in mind, George dropped down on his usual seat, making sure he was sat on the furthest edge away from Dream. He ignored the questioning glances his friends all shot each other and pretended like he didn't see the way Dream's lips turned downwards.

"So..." Bad suddenly hummed, the light-hearted tone in his voice sounding *not* so normal in George's ears, "How was class?"

George turned to face him with a dubious expression, his eyebrows furrowing slightly at the strange question. He knew he was acting a little off- but it was even odder for their group to actually willingly ask one another about their lessons. Lunch was meant to be their escape from droning teachers and never-ending homework and it was a silent agreement that they wouldn't bring it up during their breaks.

"It was fine, I guess." George drawled suspiciously, "What about you?"

"Ah! We got to make pizza in Home-Ec today," Bad answered. He sounded genuinely happy about it, at least, "Next week we have to make a different Italian dish. I'm hoping that it'll be spaghetti-"

"That sounds great, Bad, honestly," Quackity interrupted with a grin that looked weirdly forced. He set his gaze onto George- and that was when the oldest man knew he was doomed, "But I'd *really* like to hear about George's lessons again- specifically, Comp-Sci." At George's carefully schooled expression, he carried on, "So, how was it?"

"I told you that it was fine," George frowned. Internally, his mind was racing. Had Dream actually spilt the details on what had happened? Quackity didn't look as though he knew anything, though, instead looking rather confused in the way he was questioning him. George could only hope that he was only trying to be annoying, "Just like any other lesson."

He didn't clock onto the motion Karl made to Sapnap, the two having been entirely silent from

when George had sat at the table. His concentration was fully centred on diverting Quackity's prying onto someone else or at least getting it off of him. Miraculously, it was Bad that gave him the perfect material to grab his friend's attention. Bad's phone buzzed noisily against the table, lighting up with several unread messages from who he could only assume was Skeppy.

"Skeppy seems eager," George pointed out, smirking lazily when Bad suddenly stiffened in his seat, "Why aren't you answering him, hm?"

Thankfully, Quackity could never pass up the opportunity to tease him- immediately spinning around on his seat to face Bad and give him an annoying earful. Playfully making fun of Bad was quite literally his favourite thing to do, and so George knew that any and all focus on him would quickly disappear at the mention of Bad's boyfriend.

George let out a quiet sigh of relief, slumping in his seat as his body started to relax. His friends were all like energetic little puppies constantly needing to be dealt with. It was exhausting, but George wouldn't trade them for anything in the world.

Without even thinking about it, his head abruptly dropped down onto Dream's shoulder. The smell of the beach and sandalwood filled his senses- significantly more than it had whenever he sniffed Dream's jacket. George wanted nothing more than to get lost in his scent, curl up against the gland on his neck and drift off to sleep. Something felt wrong, though.

It wasn't the position or touch itself. Affection within their group wasn't exactly unusual, per se, but after the day the pair had had it was more surprising than usual to see George seeking it out. Just as Dream's arm lifted to give George more room to get comfortable, the shorter man was scrambling back into the corner of his seat that he'd deemed a safe distance away.

"Fuck, sorry!" George blurted out, his cheeks burning a furious red in embarrassment. God, he was so stupid. He'd *just* renewed his mental promise to not get too close to Dream, and now here he was trying to cuddle up to him. He laughed sheepishly, cringing slightly as he felt Karl and Sapnap's attention spring back onto him, "I'm just really tired, y'know?"

"George, you don't-" Dream interrupted himself with a frustrated huff, dragging his hand through his messy hair as if he was trying to ground himself, "You don't have to apologise for that shit- and I *know* you know I don't care if you want to... *cuddle* or whatever. I do it with everyone else all the time."

To prove his point, Dream snaked one of his long arms around Karl's shoulders, uncaring of Karl's squeak of surprise or Sapnap's confused eyebrow furrow. Karl leant into his touch regardless, his head automatically moving to rest on Dream's shoulder comfortably. Sapnap looked unfazed, simply picking up his phone as his best friend and somewhat boyfriend cuddled.

George couldn't help but feel envious of how at ease the two seemed around each other. Karl looked completely at peace, latching onto Dream's side like a koala as he snuggled up against him. Dream himself seemed to *relax* at the affection, his head tilting to rest on top of Karl's own. George wanted to be Karl more than anything in that moment.

He hated the way his stomach curled in ugly jealousy, squeezing and twisting whenever he saw Karl so much as shift a tiny bit closer to Dream. It was unfair with how he cursed Karl's own luck, his greedy anger focusing in on the fact that Karl didn't have anything to hide like he did. If George was actually a Beta, *he* could be in his friend's position.

Because Karl was an *actual* Beta, right? That's why it hurt George so much. If he was Karl, then George could do everything he did instead of living a life of secrecy. Granted, Karl had never really

outright said what his secondary gender was- but his scent was so bland and diluted that he just *had* to be one. The few times they'd hugged, George had never picked up on a certain category to his scent. It wasn't sweet like an Omegas, or earthier like an Alpha- it was just... not there.

George's eyes locked in on the way Karl had purposefully tilted his head in a way that let his nose brush up against Dream's scent gland. Betas couldn't smell scents as well as the other genders, but if they were strong enough they could perceive them just fine. Clearly, Dream's was good enough to capture even Karl's recognition. The jealousy returned tenfold at the action, causing George's stomach to squeeze painfully again.

Sapnap, who had remained uncharacteristically silent throughout the duration of lunch thus far, had been scrutinising the other three men carefully. Despite the reputation he had of being fairly 'oblivious' to his surroundings, he was actually quite observant. He'd had to adopt the trait when he'd started soccer, quickly needing to watch out for any hurt teammates or incoming opposite-team players.

He had seen the way George bristled at Karl and Dream's interaction, seen Karl's knowing little smile as he nestled against the tallest man's neck. Sapnap wasn't stupid enough to not recognise what was going on- not when it came to his closest friends. He'd let his focus settle fully on their situation, tuning out Bad and Quackity's bickering from next to him.

Dream's barely hidden, self-satisfied smirk was enough of a giveaway anyway. Sure, he'd cuddle Karl every now and then, he'd cuddled *all* of them (minus George) at least once- but never so openly, and never so intimately either. Sapnap wasn't really a jealous guy himself, he knew that despite his and Karl's weird relationship that the taller man was entirely devoted to him. If he was less secure, however, he would absolutely feel at least a flicker of jealousy.

Because of that, he could understand George's reaction. It was obvious to anyone with a working pair of eyes that Dream and George had a thing for one another. It was *way* too early to be considered love, but it was extremely apparent that there was at least a strong, mutual feeling of interest going on between them. The one thing Sapnap couldn't understand is why neither of them had done anything about it- but he eventually decided to just chalk it up to regular teenage idiocy.

"George," Sapnap called, his voice low as to not gather the other members of their group's attention, "Meet me on the sports field after school, yeah? I need to talk to you."

George slowly turned to face him, staring at him quizzically. Sapnap had successfully grabbed his attention, distracting him from the pair cuddling next to him enough to talk to him. That was a win in his books.

"Sure," George agreed, keeping his own voice just as hushed. He reached across the table to grab the lone apple left on Quackity's lunch tray, the shorter man too caught up in bothering Bad to notice. Honestly, he probably would've given it to George anyway. He took a large bite from it before trying to speak through muffled chews, "Any particular reason as to why?"

"Not really," Sapnap shrugged, "Just wanted to talk, s'all."

Sensing the end of the conversation, George zoned out. He watched Dream and Karl out the corner of his eye, barely holding back a frown at how comfortable they both looked. Karl had dozed off on Dream's shoulder, the can of Monster he'd been holding having been put safely on the table. Dream had pulled out his phone at some point, scrolling through TikTok mindlessly as he hummed along to the various songs.

Sapnap could only watch in amusement, letting out a quiet snort at how distracted George was.

He'd been the one to move Karl's can of Monster, easily predicting that he'd fall asleep on Dream's shoulder. He forgot, sometimes, that George was new-ish to their group. The older man had fit in seamlessly, acting as if they were old friends within a few weeks of knowing each other. In moments like this, though, George's newness was super apparent.

In an attempt to distract him again, Sapnap had started making sports talk with George. He'd seemed mildly uninterested until soccer was brought up, suddenly lighting up in something akin to excitement. Soccer was one of the few things that despite having been chosen to help protect his secret, George actually enjoyed. It was fun and let him burn off the excess energy his suppressants gave him.

"Nah dude, you're fucking *dumb* if you think that those losers at Manburg have a chance at beating us," Sapnap snorted loudly, "C'mon, have you seen them play?"

"You don't understand!" George quickly defended himself, "I talked to one of the guy's on their team last year at a party, and they've got this new player that's *insane* apparently. He's a newbie to the school itself, but's already thought of as some kind of ace."

"What's his name, then?" Sapnap scoffed, shaking his head in disbelief, "I definitely would've heard something if he's supposedly *that* good."

"Techno... I think?" George shrugged. He'd been drunk as *shit* that night- so it was a miracle that he'd even remembered a part of the conversation at all, "Soot's older brother."

"Oh fuck, really?" Sapnap's eyes widened in shock, "You should mention this at training, bro, the captain's gonna lose his shit at the thought of another Soot sibling being on their team."

George quickly agreed, assuring that he'd bring it up at their next practice session. Soccer wasn't just about the physicalities. Knowing your opposition and creating strategies based on that were extremely useful in-game. George had always been a little more analytical than most, enjoying the more mental side to soccer just as much as the physical.

Their conversation died down again when Quackity got bored of tormenting Bad, instead deciding to turn his mischief onto them instead. It would be a lie to say that even though Quackity's teasing could be annoying as hell, it never failed to make George feel better. He was his best friend for a reason, after all.

Eventually, the school bell rang again to signify the end of lunch, their group exchanging quick goodbyes before darting off to their next lessons.

x-x-x-x-x

As promised, George made his way to the sports field as soon as his final class of the day was over.

He honestly had no clue what Sapnap wanted to talk about, and couldn't deny that he felt a little anxious because of it. Realistically, he knew that his friend would never call him out to just... have a go at him or something- but the fear was always there. What if Dream had told him what happened earlier that morning, and Sapnap wanted to call him out on his behaviour?

George was surprisingly early, electing to wait on their usual after practice bench so that Sapnap would find him easily. He threw his bag down on the table in front of him, dropping his forehead down onto it so he could rest his weary head. He hoped that this wasn't going to be a lengthy conversation, as exhaustion was slowly creeping up his veins. Today had been very emotionally taxing for him, and he'd need at *least* another 2 - 3 business weeks to process everything that had

happened.

Hell, he still hadn't fully registered what had happened at the movies.

Just as his thoughts began to spiral into images of Dream's large, warm hands- Sapnap appeared. He dumped his bag onto the table with a loud bang, grinning childishly at George's annoyed grunt, "Falling asleep, Gogy?" He teased, dropping down onto the bench opposite him, "I'll be sure to make this quick, then."

"Thanks." George snorted, lifting his head up from his own bag to meet his eyes, "What'd you wanna talk about anyway? Couldn't this have been done over text?"

"I guess so," Sapnap hummed in mild agreement. This was a somewhat serious talk, though- and *everyone* knew how fast George tried to get away from conversations like that. To lighten the mood, Sapnap started smirking impishly, reaching one of his arms across the table to slowly boop George's nose, "Forgive me for wanting to see more of your cute little face."

"Fuck off," George chuckled, his cheeks pinkening slightly at the compliment. He knew Sapnap most likely wasn't being genuine, but the praise felt nice anyway. He batted Sapnap's hand away like a fly, trying to level him with a (falsely) irritated gaze, "You're so annoying."

"Fine, fine," Sapnap gave in, quickly retracting his hand. He quickly turned his expression into something neutral, hoping that it would help George feel more at ease as he spoke, "So... you and Dream, huh? What's going on there?"

George genuinely didn't know how to answer. On one hand, this was Dream's *best* friend, and anything he said could potentially be relayed back to the taller man. Whilst he didn't believe Sapnap would ever do something along those lines, the fear was still there. George had trained himself growing up to *not* trust people with his secrets, after all. It was too risky.

On the other, Sapnap was a great friend with even greater advice. He'd proven how caring he was many, many times and consistently showed that he was trustworthy. George felt like he was about to burst under the weight of all his thoughts and secrets, and Sapnap seemed like the perfect guy to vent to. He knew deep down that if he insisted on it enough, the younger man wouldn't spill a word of anything he'd said.

Eventually, George settled on firing back an inquiry of his own. It was easier to deflect his questions than answer them, "What do you mean?"

"Don't play dumb, Georgie, it's not a good look on you," Sapnap huffed, though his tone was still somewhat light-hearted, "You know *exactly* what I mean. Something happened earlier today, and I want to find out what it was. Why did you look like you'd rather be sat anywhere else during lunch? Did something happen in Comp-Sci? That's the only class you guys have with each other, and he would've told me if you met up over the weekend."

"Jesus," George groaned, his head starting to pound at the multitude of queries sent his way, "One question at a time, okay? Nothing happened in Comp *or* in general. I'm just tired, that's all."

"The 'tired' excuse might work on the others- but it won't on me," Sapnap crossed his arms over his chest, looking at George like a fed-up teacher would to a naughty student, "Being tired wouldn't have you sitting on the edge of your fucking seat."

"How would you know, huh?" George snapped back. Frustrated tears quickly started to sting at the corner of his eyes, threatening to tip over at the stern look on Sapnap's expression. Fuck, this was

embarrassing. His voice came out croaky as he carried on rambling, "You know *nothing*- literally nothing! I'm fucking *exhausted*, Sap- not just tired."

"George..." Sapnap murmured, quickly picking up on the strain in his voice. He got up from his own bench, moving over until he was sat next to George on his instead. His arm tenderly wrapped around George's shoulders as his hand slid up to George's head, forcing the other man's face down onto the crook of his neck in a brotherly embrace, "What's going on, man? Talk to me."

"Everything's so much, y'know?" George sniffled, the dam finally breaking at the care he was being shown. For once, he ignored the warning bells in his head that screamed at being so close to an Alpha, instead burying his face further into Sapnap's neck, "I have a lot of... *stuff* going on in my private life, and that on top of Dream just feels like a lot."

"D'you wanna talk about it?" Sapnap hummed, his fingers gently fiddling with the hairs curled behind George's ear, "I'm here if you just want to vent or something, too. We don't have to have a whole discussion 'nd shit if you don't want to."

"Thank you," George sighed in relief, his body visibly relaxing at his words. A few tears dripped down onto Sapnap's shirt at the motion, but the younger man didn't really seem to care. George carefully ran through his problems in his head, picking out a few that could be openly discussed, "I *guess* I like Dream, at least a little- but I can't be with him."

"Why?" Sapnap tilted his head curiously, "Is it the whole... gay thing? I know the guy's on the team seem funny about it at first, but I promise they get used to it eventually."

"Sure," George slowly agreed, "I just can't have that kind of attention on me, y'know? I need to stay... plain, I guess."

It was partly the truth anyway. George wasn't out *officially* to anyone but Quackity- who clapped him on the back in congratulations when he'd told him. Betas were looked upon as societies norm as they didn't have any confusing extra dynamics that 'gave them an excuse', like some homophobes would say. Homosexuality wasn't as accepted as it was for Alphas and Omegas, but even then it wasn't completely supported with open arms. The school they attended was mostly open-minded, but there were still hidden bullies and homophobic people loitering the halls.

George hated that he knew some of them.

People on his own soccer team had expressed their disliking towards people like Sapnap and George, and would easily make homophobic remarks during their time getting changed in the locker rooms. It hurt, of course, but both men had thick enough skin to ignore it. Sapnap himself was out, and the team ignored it for the most part. That didn't mean he still didn't receive his fair share of mocking remarks or insults, though.

His friend group all had an inkling about his sexuality, obviously, and for the most part, were all some variety of LGBTQ+ themselves. George knew that Sapnap and Karl were both bisexual, Dream was pansexual, and himself and Bad were gay. Quackity didn't really have a label, not having much interest in romance or sex as a whole. It was rare to have such a diverse group, but George loved it.

"Plain?" Sapnap repeated with a gruff laugh, "There's nothing 'plain' about you, dude, you're all colourful and shit."

"You know what I meant," George huffed, shaking his head fondly.

"I do," Sapnap calmed down again, going back to playing with George's hair soothingly, "You know that no one will care if you do come out, right? Our friend group all loves you for you- and the people that we don't know don't matter. Anyone who won't accept that part of you is making a huge fucking mistake, Georgie, because you're great inside and out, okay?"

"You're going to make me cry again, you asshole," George groaned weakly, tears quickly welling up in his eyes again. Never in his wildest dreams did he ever think he'd get blessed with such amazing friends. It suddenly felt like one burden had been lifted from his chest. He lifted one of his hands to grab Sapnap's free one, squeezing it gratefully, "Thank you, though- that means a lot to me."

"Of course," Sapnap smiled softly, squeezing George's hand back, "Was that the only thing that was bothering you?"

"No," George answered truthfully a few moments later. He lifted his head up from Sapnap's shoulder, "I can't talk about that stuff, but thank you for offering to hear me out anyway."

"No worries, I won't make you talk anymore." Sapnap chuckled, squeezing his hand again when George started laughing back, "Just keep in mind that I'm always here for you, okay? You can tell me this kinda stuff."

"I know, thank you." George nodded with a small smile, "You're a good friend, Sap."

"Damn right I am," Sapnap snorted. He let go of George's hand, watching as the shorter man moved to get off the bench, "I won't tell anyone anything you've told me, by the way- but I'm sure they all already have an idea."

"Well, I appreciate your secrecy anyway." George rolled his eyes fondly, swinging his bag back onto his shoulder. He started making his way off of the field, turning back around when he heard Sapnap shout his name.

"Hey... just- just don't hurt him, okay?" Sapnap sighed, a somewhat pained expression flitting across his face, "Dream has been through hell and back when it comes to love, man, just be careful with him. Please? I can't see my best friend go through that again."

"Of course," George softened, moving back over to pat his arm reassuringly, "You have my word, alright? I won't let myself hurt him."

"Thank you," Sapnap murmured, gratefulness ringing loud and clear in his voice, "He's already given me the whole 'promising not to hurt you' speech to me about you, too. I just don't wanna see either of you be put through that shit."

"You have my word," George repeated, a bit more firmly this time.

Chapter End Notes

the plot thickens ;) and so does the angst LMAO. trust me when i say that this fic is only going to get darker xoxo

anyways, i just wanted to quickly thank you all so much for your support! your

comments, bookmarks and kudos all help motivate me to write. i've loved interacting with you all here and on twitter too! it really means the world to me. i love you all, and have a good weekend! <3

Chapter Summary

The gang get invited to a Halloween party, we find out some Dream and Wilbur lore, and Q and George go costume shopping.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

A few days after his talk with Sapnap, things were almost back to normal.

George had put a bit of distance in between himself and Dream, but not enough that the taller man or the rest of their friends would get concerned. Dream hadn't made any more flirty remarks or overly affectionate touches since the whole 'glasses incident', as George so lovingly liked to call it, and so their friendship remained at a positively neutral level. If George pretended hard enough, he could almost ignore his small, blossoming crush he had on Dream.

He'd tricked himself into thinking it was simply because Dream had been giving him the attention his touch-starved self craved so badly. The Omega part of him was attached purely because he was a nice-smelling Alpha, and that was all there was to it. They were friends, *very* good friends- and George could even see himself calling themselves *best* friends. Though Dream could never replace Quackity in that department.

As much as George denied his crush, he could not deny the fact that it was Dream who'd woken up his inner Omega. He'd never felt it as strongly as he had before he met Dream, much less to the point where it actually started affecting his thoughts and feelings. George was mildly concerned that this could become a potential problem in the future, but quickly calmed himself down. There was no need to be thinking so negatively when everything was going so well.

Right?

Having a group of people to sit with that he genuinely like was an incredible sensation. George had never felt so at peace before, instantly relaxing whenever he caught sight of their familiar table. Their seats always remained the same, with Dream never changing from his place next to George. It made him feel safe, in a way- despite the fact that he was the one sitting on the outer edge of the table instead of Dream.

That fact hadn't changed today as George walked into the cafeteria with a big smile on his face, his previous lesson having gone exceedingly well. He'd gotten higher marks than he'd wanted, but was in such a good mood that he couldn't really find it within himself to care. His grin only grew at the sight of their table, quickly making his way over to it.

The first thing he noticed was the startling wave of nervous energy coming off of Karl. The younger man looked all flushed and twitchy, sitting even closer to Sapnap than normal. Sapnap himself appeared to be on edge, eyes constantly scanning the other tables around them warily. George slowly slid onto the bench next to Dream, making sure to keep his distance as he raised an eyebrow up at the younger man questioningly. Dream only shook his head in return, silently telling George to not concern himself over it.

Well, *that* was weird.

"Karl," George greeted carefully, "Are you okay?"

Karl hummed in response, dropping his head down onto Sapnap's shoulder. He instantly snuggled up against his neck, Sapnap's arm winding around Karl's waist protectively as he tried to tug the taller man impossibly closer. George would've found the whole interaction cute if he wasn't so confused. Dream was refusing to tell him what was going on, looking very hunched over into himself as Sapnap's eyes kept glancing over at him, and Bad and Q just remained mildly impassive.

The silence at the table was seriously uncomfortable, no one knowing what to say in case they made the already strange situation worse. Everyone *but* George looked as though they knew what was going on, and that made him feel almost offended. Why would no one tell him specifically? If it was a privacy thing, George could keep it a secret! God only knows how many he had himself.

Suddenly, George's phone started buzzing noisily against the table. He could almost sigh in relief at the welcomed distraction, quickly picking it up before scanning his eyes over the text notification.

Wilbur Soot - Today at 12:47

hey george

party at mine on halloween

you coming?

George's eyes widened at the invitation, his gaze instantly lifting to flicker in between his friends. Wilbur's house parties were *legendary*, the kind of party that you'd never reject the invite to. George had gotten an automatic in when he first joined the soccer team, and slowly he built up something akin to a friendship with Wilbur himself. They'd started texting in his second year at high school, and ever since then they'd talked on a near-weekly basis.

The only problem was that Wilbur's parties were good for one main reason; they were *exclusive*. You had to know someone to be able to go, and even then it depended on just who you were. Anyone popular, rich or good-looking got a personal invite- and after that? It was plus ones only. Sapnap and Quackity had both been before, but the others? George had no clue.

Wilbur was from their rival school, Manburg, a sport-focused school. Their sports teams all had a friendly competition ongoing, and so anyone from any of their teams got automatically invited. As far as George knew, Karl, Dream and Bad weren't on any, so the chances of them being invited were slim. George had never missed Wilbur's annual party before, but for his new friends? He absolutely would.

"Are you guys going to Wilbur's Halloween thing?" George asked carefully. Might as well just rip the band-aid straight off, right? He nearly winced when everyone's eyes snapped over to stare at him, "He just texted me about it."

"Shit, it's October already?" Quackity snorted in disbelief. He grinned, quickly making a thumbs up with his hand as he said, "Of course I am, man, what kind of fuckin' loser would say no to that?"

"You're a loser anyway." George teased, smirking when Quackity started spluttering insult after insult in return. He quickly tuned him out, smiling gently at Bad as he asked, "How about you?"

"I don't really know Wilbur," Bad frowned, "I mean, I know *of* him- but I've never met him. I got invited to one of his parties a few years ago through my paintball club, but I was sick so I couldn't go. I haven't been invited since."

"You do paintball?" Quackity asked before he burst out laughing, arms flying down to wrap around his stomach supportively as he curled over from how hard he was wheezing. The image of Bad doing, well, *anything* with a gun was amusing enough for him to use as teasing material for weeks. Tears started to collect in the corners of his eyes as he started coughing, choking from the force of his laughs.

"Yes?" Bad raised an eyebrow up at him. He looked thoroughly unimpressed at Quackity's theatrics, "Every Thursday after school. That's why I couldn't hang out last week when you asked, remember?"

"You just said you had to go to a club, not fucking *paintball*!" Quackity argued. He brightened up as an idea came to mind, "Oh my God, can I come with you next week? Please?"

"You want to come with me to paintball club?" Bad repeated slowly. At Quackity's pleading expression, he shook his head, "No. Absolutely not."

George blocked them out as the two started bickering, Quackity desperately trying to convince Bad to change his mind. He looked over at Sapnap and Karl again, frowning once he noticed just how out of it they both looked. It was like they were in their only little world, completely oblivious to anyone but each other. Again, it probably would've been cute if George wasn't so worried about them both.

Sapnap's scent smelt off, too. Normally it was pretty reigned in, the younger man way too self-conscious to let it float about freely. Yet today it seemed to be fucking *everywhere*, clinging to the members of their group as well as to the furniture they were sat on. It circled the air surrounding them too, permeating literally everything in sight. George didn't really mind as he personally *liked* Sapnap's scent, but knew from Sapnap's expressed insecurities that this wasn't normal behaviour.

Karl looked completely gone. His eyes were hidden by the fringe of his floppy brown hair, but George knew that if he could see them they'd be all glassy-looking. He hadn't lifted his head either since he'd started resting it on Sapnap's shoulder, body completely curled into Sapnap's almost anxiously. George ultimately chalked it up to Karl having had a bad day, and so Sapnap was being overly protective in response.

Ah, young love.

"Are you guys coming?" George carefully asked the cuddling duo, subconsciously inching slightly closer to Dream as Sapnap's sharp stare turned to him, "...Or not! That's cool too. Whatever you wanna do, I totally support-"

"Dunno," Sapnap murmured, cutting George off from his nervous rambling. Sapnap's eyes slowly shifted back to gaze down lovingly at Karl, "Probably, but it depends on how he's doing at the time."

George nodded slowly, forgetting that Sapnap wasn't even looking at him anymore and therefore couldn't see the action. He turned to face Dream, raising an eyebrow up in confusion at him before tilting his head in the direction of their friends. Dream winced, quickly shaking his own head in

response before mouthing a quick 'Sorry'.

"What's going on, Dream?" George hissed quietly, making sure to keep his voice quiet enough that it wouldn't alert any of the others, "Karl looks fucking *high* and Sap looks like he wants to attack everyone around him."

"I know," Dream muttered back, "It's not my place to explain, though."

"...Fine." George huffed, turning his attention back onto his phone. If his friends weren't going to tell him what was happening, then he wasn't going to try and get himself involved. Clearly, he was being excluded for a reason, and he had no reason to change that. He pretended that not knowing didn't hurt, and that their unwillingness to tell him *wasn't* making his trust issues flare-up. That would be petty and dumb of him, and George was neither of those things (he was).

"So," Dream hummed, very obviously trying to change the subject, "You talk to Wilbur?"

"Yeah..?" George answered, his tone a little incredulous as he asked back, "You didn't catch that from the text he sent me? That's such a big brain moment from you, Dreamie, really showing of your 1000 IQ."

"Oh shut up, you know what I meant." Dream scoffed.

"I do," George smirked. He stuck his tongue out at him when Dream started rolling his eyes, enjoying having the upper hand on him for once. He taunted Dream a bit longer before eventually giving in and explaining himself, "Yes Dream, I'm friends with Wilbur."

"That's cool," Dream remarked petulantly, refusing to meet George's gaze as he muttered under his breath, "*Fucking dick*."

"What was that?" George snorted, having only caught onto the 'dick' part, "Is there something wrong with us being friends? Don't like that I'm giving my attention to someone else, huh?"

"No," Dream responded quickly, way too fast for it to have come off as natural. Yes, the attention thing was part of it- but there was no way in *hell* that he was going to tell George that. He sighed, pushing around the salad in front of him, "The Soot family are just a bunch of assholes, s'all."

That took George by surprise. Not only was Dream knowledgeable of Wilbur, but he knew the rest of his family too? George himself hadn't even met them. He knew that Wilbur had siblings, having seen the family portraits that lined the staircase in his house, but he didn't know them personally. Dream was seriously so mysterious. George barely knew the basics about him, having only been told the simplest things such as his favourite colour and his cat's name.

Seeing George's dumbfounded expression, Dream grimaced, "I've known them since I was a baby, unfortunately. I basically grew up with Wilbur and Techno... and *Tommy*."

"Tommy?" George repeated in confusion. Techno's name obviously rang a bell, having been discussing the man with Sapnap just last week- yet he'd *never* heard of any sibling named Tommy. The fact that Dream grew up with them in itself was slightly shocking, and the clear disdain he had for their family *definitely* surprised him. Dream *should* be super close with them if he supposedly grew up with them, right?

Wrong.

"Tommy's a little shit," Dream grunted, his eyes hardening into a glare as he internally ran through his memories of the much younger boy, "Seriously, he's the biggest fucking *brat* that I've ever met.

Last week he stole my iPod, and he *still* hasn't given it back."

George tried to fight back his laughter, he honestly really did, but the genuinely pissed off expression on Dream's face made it burst violently out of his chest. Dream looked so offended, staring at George in a mix of betrayal and disbelief. It only served to make George laugh harder, clutching the edges of the table as he chuckled in between deep gasps of air.

"Holy fuck," George gasped after a minute or two, "Thank you for that. I don't think I've laughed that hard since middle school."

"Glad to have helped." Dream grumbled, frowning in a way that looked *suspiciously* like a pout.

"Aw, you grumpy little baby." George made a cooing noise in the back of his throat, completely foregoing his rule of not getting close to Dream as he leant over and poked his cheek, "Is someone mad that I made fun of their problem with a *child*?"

Leaning over was a grave, *grave* mistake- one that George would quickly come to learn. The action had caused him to get way too close to Dream's scent gland, his scent quite literally exploding into George's face as he accidentally took a large inhale of it. The smell of sandalwood and sunny beaches filled his nostrils, making George's head spin in a mix of want and neediness. He could fucking *taste* the salt of the ocean, and simultaneously felt like the sun's warm rays had shone down on his entire body.

"...George?" Dream murmured, his hands having quickly moved to cup George's cheeks in concern, "Are you okay?"

George had gone a violently bright shade of red at the smell of his scent, his pupils fully dilating in the need to get even closer to his scent gland. His hand had dropped from Dream's cheek to grip tightly at the sleeve of his hoodie in an attempt to keep himself upright. His Omega side was clawing at his mind in an attempt to be let out, and by doing so accidentally caused George to let out an almost illegible whimper. Dream had quickly spun around to face him at that, eyes wide in shock.

"Huh?" George blinked lazily, his dropping his face fully into Dream's palms, letting the younger man support his heavy head. Dream's hands were so *big*, covering the redness of George's cheeks almost entirely as his fingers stretched over his cheekbones to rest on the back's of his ears. Now that he was thinking about it, *everything* about Dream seemed to be big-

"Georgie," Dream crooned, the sound rumbling low in his chest. *That* snapped George out of it, his eyes instantly widening at the deep noise. Dream himself looked surprised that whatever he'd done with his voice had worked. In any other moment, George probably would've found the voice thing hot- but now? No way. He quickly slid back onto his side of the bench, shuffling until he was sat on the very, very edge of it.

"Fuck, I'm sorry," George quickly apologised, pressing one of his hands over his heart in an attempt to force it to calm down its erratic beating, "I was a little out of it for a sec there, huh?"

"You can say that again," Quackity snorted from his side of the table, "What the hell was that, George?"

"Uh," George answered intelligently. Jesus, even *Karl* had lifted his head at the commotion. Despite the overall foggy expression he had, he was *still* managing to stare at George with wide, surprised eyes like everyone else. How the fuck was he meant to get himself out of this one? He couldn't use his tired excuse, Sapnap had rightfully called him out on using that one way too much

just a week prior, "...I don't know. I've been really stressed lately, maybe it was because of that?"

"You don't know?" Quackity repeated very slowly, acting as though he was talking to a child, "Seriously? You looked completely out of it, dude, almost like-"

"Don't," George interrupted, his voice completely cold and void of any kind tones. He couldn't bear to hear Quackity finish his sentence, lest he said the one thing that George always feared. God, he was so stupid. Just this morning he was promising himself that he wouldn't let himself slip up anymore, and now he'd gone and done it in front of all his friends, "Can we just drop it? Please?"

Everyone slowly nodded, excluding Dream, who still looked slightly shocked. Quackity was eyeing with suspiciously, sending shivers of anxiety all around George's body. He prayed to all and any Gods that were listening for them to please keep make sure his friends would never find out about his second gender. The table quietly broke out into light chatter again, trying to get rid of any awkwardness leftover from George's screw-up.

"George," Quackity clicked his tongue to get his attention, "Let's go shopping after school, 'kay? We need to get new costumes for Wilbur's thing."

"Yeah, okay," George responded quietly, not meeting his best friend's gaze in fear of what he'd see.

x-x-x-x-x

The car ride to their local mall was... awkward, to say the least.

The normally loud, laughter-filled trip was silent and filled with the kind of tension nobody should have with their best friend. It felt sharp and full of suspicion from Quackity's end and nervous from George's. This shopping trip could only go one of two ways. First, Quackity would corner George into spilling his guts until all his secrets were out in the open. That would obviously lead to a very rocky end to their friendship in George's opinion- and was the last thing he wanted.

Another way would be that Quackity remained respectful of George's boundaries, and they had a nice shopping trip filled with their usual banter. George could see how stupid that sounded instantly after finishing the sentence in his head. Whilst it was true that Quackity could be very kind and respectful, he also would *not* let go of something once he caught wind of it, including George's weird little situation from lunch.

They'd parked in silence, walked into the mall in silence and continued keeping it that way until they reached the costume shop. They came to this exact one every year, tons of good memories instantly coming to mind when they entered the small little store. Unsurprisingly, it was Quackity who broke the tension, speaking as he rifled through the costume racks.

"So, are we going to talk about today?" Quackity hummed, holding up a Batman costume to his chest before returning it to the rack, "I mean, we don't *have* to, but I'd like to know *what* exactly all of that was about."

"There's nothing to say," George pursed his lips, "I fucked up, okay? I let my stress get the better of me."

Quackity went silent again for a minute, his hands trailing over the different hero related costumes for a moment before he shuffled over to the rack of Villain ones George had been flicking through. He looked up at George from over the rack, his eyes unreadable as he said, "You don't have to lie to me, George, not now or ever. I know you've been hiding some shit from me for a while now- but

today was *scary*, man. What happened?"

"I really don't know," George answered honestly. It was the partial truth, at least. He knew it was his Omega's fault- but what exactly it had done was still a mystery to him as well. He himself didn't know why he reacted the way he did to Dream, Dream's scent or his voice. George *hated* lying to his best friend, but he'd rather die than expose himself, "I remember leaning over to poke him, and then things get blurry from there."

"Really?" Quackity narrowed his eyes in suspicion, "You don't remember anything that happened? That's even more concerning, dude."

"I mean, I remember *parts* of it," George quickly backtracked. Again, he was telling the partial truth. Some parts of the whole ordeal *were* truly blurry to him- like the space of time in between him poking Dream's cheek, only to find himself gripping the taller man's jumper instead, "Just not everything, okay? I'm fine, Q, I promise."

"I *am* worried about you though," Quackity pressed on, his hand raising to grip the rack of clothes tightly, "You've been acting.... *weird* ever since we started hanging out with Dream's group. Is that it? Did something happen with someone from it?"

"No, nothing happened," George huffed, raising one of his own hands to rub tiredly at the temples on the sides of his head. Fuck, he was getting a headache, "Can you just let it go? Please? I won't let it happen again, so you can stop your worrying."

"Fucking *talk* to me, George!" Quackity suddenly snapped, causing George to immediately recoil in fear. Quackity looked just as shocked as George, his hand lifting from the rack to cover his mouth, "Shit- wait, I didn't mean to-"

"Leave it," George muttered quietly, "Just fucking leave it. We're getting our costumes and going, alright? I'm done."

Quackity fell silent again at that, instantly moving away from George's rack to go find another one elsewhere in the store. George finally let himself relax slightly at being left alone, his head dropping down to rest on the cool metal bar at the top of the rack. God, everything was such a mess. George had spent the past eight years of his life creating something perfect, something that would keep him safely under the radar and away from people's prying eyes.

And now everything was crumbling around him.

Times like these made George miss his mum, wanting nothing more than to feel her warm arms curling around him protectively. She'd stroke the back of his head and soothe away his anxieties with soft words, easing his fears in a way only a mother could. He never had to hide anything from her, as she always knew everything about him anyway. For once in his goddamn life, George wanted to talk to someone who he wasn't keeping any stupid secrets from.

He didn't even realise he'd been crying until a tear dropped down onto the lenses of his glasses.

Was he seriously crying again? Jesus, it had barely been a week since his last tearful session. At least then he had Sapnap to comfort him. George shouldn't be so dependant on others to fix his emotions for him, and *especially* shouldn't let himself get so emotional in the first place. He'd spent so long training himself into being the perfect Beta growing up that he never let himself have any kind of outbursts, and now that all his hard work was slipping away it seemed that his control on his emotions was too.

Just a little bit longer. He only had to do this for a little while longer.

George's head snapped back up as he heard Quackity getting close again, instantly wiping away the unfallen tears in his eyes before standing up straight and adjusting his glasses. It wasn't fair of him to be mad at Quackity, not when the younger man was only concerned about him. He forced on a small smile, picking out a random costume from his size section before waving with his free hand.

"You found something?" George asked, keeping his tone warm and friendly sounding.

"...Yeah," Quackity nodded slowly, his eyes darting between George's tear-stained cheeks, his obviously fake grin, to the costume in his hands, "I'm going as the Joker."

"Nice," George nodded. He looked down at his own costume, wincing when he saw what it was, "I guess I'm going as a... princess?"

Quackity let out a long sigh, walking until he was stood in front of George. He contemplated something for a moment before inhaling determinedly, his arms very gently wrapping around George's waist as he pulled him into a hug. George was absolutely shell-shocked. In his three years of knowing Quackity, not once had they ever gone further than a high five. They just weren't very touchy people, and that was fine with them.

Somehow, George's eyes managed to widen even more in surprise as Quackity's head hesitantly hooked over his shoulder. George carefully curled his own arms around Q's torso, returning the hug as casually as he could. Fuck, when was the last time he'd been properly hugged? Almost instantly, George snuggled against him, the small, touch-starved part of himself desperately craving the affection he'd gone so long without.

Yes, Sapnap had semi-hugged him during their talk the week prior, but that couldn't be considered a real hug- at least in George's mind. Nothing compared to the feeling of someone holding you tight, embracing you so firmly in their arms that your fears don't really seem so scary anymore. It was just what George needed, and it was *perfect*.

"Thank you," George murmured against Quackity's head, "Y'know... for all of this."

"Anytime, man," Quackity replied, very obviously trying to keep their hug as casual as possible. Quackity was amazing with words on a general basis, normally knowing exactly what to say and when. Apparently though, affection rendered his speaking ability useless, "I'm sorry about before."

"Don't be," George hummed, pulling back from the hug enough to stare him in the eyes, "It's *my* fault for being weird like you said. I'm sorry for making you worry so much, Q."

"You should be, asshole," Quackity puffed, his tone laced with light-hearted mocking. His eyes randomly lit up with an idea, his hand lowering to grab the skirt part of George's costume, "To make up for it, you're wearing that costume to Wil's party."

"You're crazy," George snorted, quickly shaking his head in dismissal. At Quackity's firm stare, he very promptly started frowning, his head shaking only getting more frantic, "You- you can't be serious. You want me to dress up as a fucking *princess* for Wilbur's Halloween party? The most important event we'll go to this year? Do you even realise how stupid you sound?"

"No balls," Quackity taunted right against his ear, smirking at the way George's jaw tightened in anger, "What, are you a fucking *pussy*, George? Can't even wear a little princess dress? That's honestly embarrassing, man."

Hook, line and sinker.

"I'll wear the goddamn princess dress," George hissed, ripping the costume out of Quackity's hand before marching up to the till. Quackity started after him with the smuggest look he'd ever produced, swinging the bag containing his own costume back and forth. He laughed loudly, uncaring of the other people around him when the shopkeeper sighed tiredly at the sight of George's costume.

After he was done, George quite literally stormed out of the shop, refusing to wait for or even *look* at Quackity with the rage he felt, "I hate you. I hate you so, so much."

"Love you too, Georgie Weorgie." Quackity teased back after he'd finally caught up with him, earning himself a hard punch in the shoulder.

They continued walking until they found themselves outside a new-ish looking milkshake stand, deciding to grab a drink before they head back to Quackity's for the rest of the evening. That one milkshake quickly became two, and ultimately ended up turning into an entire afternoon of hanging out and visiting various shops in an attempt to buy George more clothes.

Now, Quackity thought of himself as a pretty good friend. He consistently showed his love and support towards their little group, but especially George. He had no qualms about calling the older man out on any bullshit he spouted, and was able to always either give him the hard truth or something a little softer depending on what George needed in the moment.

Today was a 'hard truth' kind of day.

George had forced them to go into some random designer clothing shop, running off for almost twenty minutes until he showed up again in a goddamn *Supreme* hoodie of all things. He looked way too pleased with himself for buying such a sickening brand of clothing. He'd boasted it to Quackity proudly, going so far as to grab the sides of the hoodie to thrust the bright red logo in his face.

"George, I love you man- really," Quackity started with a deep sigh, his eyes lifting up from the hoodie logo to stare into the tinted lenses of George's glasses, "But why the *fuck* are you wearing Supreme merch in 2021? That's not cool, dude."

"Seriously?" George huffed in disbelief, pouting slightly as he stared down at his own chest, "This cost me, like, \$150 or something. Is it really that bad?"

"You spent almost two hundred *fuckin* dollars on a piece of Supreme clothing?" Quackity suddenly yelled, quickly garnering attention from the other shoppers in the shop. He ignored George's frantic attempts at shushing him, his voice only growing louder in disbelief, "Jesus, George! How the fuck did you spend so much money on something so goddamn ugly?"

"Shut up!" George hissed, dropping his bags to the floor so he could pull the hoodie off of him. He shoved into one of his bags, his cheeks dusted a light pink in embarrassment as he watched the other shoppers slowly turn away from them, "There, it's gone. Can we go now?"

"Happily," Quackity sniffed dramatically as he turned on his heel to exit the shop. George trailed after him, keeping his head low as mortification continued to run through his veins. He was never shopping with Q *again*.

The rest of the shopping trip was a lot more peaceful, only entering a few more shops before exhaustion won out. They loaded back into the car with tired groans, their bags piled not so neatly on the backseat of Quackity's car. Quackity randomly started making fun of George's costume again, prompting the older man to quickly pull out his phone and respond.

It also gave him an excuse to ignore Quackity's teasing rambling.

Wilbur Soot - Today at 12:47

hey george

party at mine on halloween

you coming?

You - Today at 18:03

yeah :]

I'll see you there

Chapter End Notes

thank you all so much for your support, as always!! 7k hits is insane honestly, and it means the world to me that so many of you have even taken a quick look at this story <3 thank you again for reading, commenting, bookmarking and giving kudos! all of those things help me out so much.

feel free to follow my twitter @elfxee!! you can find polls and updates related to this fic on there :] (to anyone who already followed me- i had to make a new account! my users the same, and my old account has a similar one. if you want to keep following me, please check to make sure you're following my new one instead. thank you! <3)

Chapter Summary

George goes to Dream's house to work on a pair assignment and Sapnap is a mess.

Chapter Notes

loop 'i feel like im drowning' by two feet whilst reading :) thank me later lmao

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After his impromptu shopping trip with Quackity, he'd felt a million times lighter. For those few hours where they were just mindlessly messing around and hanging out like they used to, George had managed to overlook all of his current dilemmas. He hadn't forgotten them by any means, but he felt so young and carefree that the negative emotions behind them were squashed down for a while. The elation had lasted well over the weekend and into the next school week, his positive energy coming with him into his Comp-Sci class.

Sure, things were still a little shaky. It seemed like no one had forgotten George's slip-up in the cafeteria from the week prior- including Dream. No one verbally brought it up, but George could feel the sceptical looks in their eyes whenever they thought he wouldn't notice. George himself, however, decided it was best to pretend as though it had never happened.

So long as he continued putting space between himself and Dream, *maybe* a little more than usual thanks to the 'incident', their friendship would be fine. So long as he continued routinely taking his pills like clockwork, his secrets would stay safe. So long as he ignored his friend's questions and their suspicious glances, he'd never be found out.

It would be fine, though. George had already started planning out what colleges he wanted to apply to and where exactly he'd live. If everything went according to plan, then he'd be out of the state at the end of the year. That's what kept him going, the knowledge that someday soon he'd get out of this place and into somewhere more Omega friendly- where he could *finally* be himself.

Just a few more months.

George repeated those words like a mantra whenever his head became too much for him to handle, or the secrets and lies he was forced to juggle daily became too overwhelming to manage. They were his saving grace, a flimsy little chant used whenever he was falling into the deep end. They also worked to keep back his negative thoughts, to fight his inner Omega when it became too rowdy, and to help control his constantly changing emotions.

George reiterated those words to himself mentally as he entered school first thing Monday morning, desperately clinging onto the light feeling leftover from his weekend out with Quackity. Thankfully, they worked, blocking out the normal slight feeling of paranoia he got whenever he was in the building to instead replace it with a calm, happy feeling.

He hummed to himself quietly as he made his way to Comp-Sci, strolling in an uncharacteristically casual way as he weaved through the crowded hallway. Today felt as though it was going to be a good day, his leftover happiness being so strong that he felt as though he could combat anything in his way. George almost forgot he was meant to be distancing himself from Dream as he entered the classroom, his expression lighting up the minute he caught wind of the taller man.

Dream was lying face-down on his desk with his lanky arms draped uselessly beside his head, a position that George always seemed to catch him in. He wasn't even using his backpack as a pillow this time, instead letting his head rest painfully against the cold wood. George would've felt concerned if he didn't know Dream as well as he did.

"Dream!" George greeted with a cheery tone as he slid effortlessly into the seat next to him, "Good morning."

Dream lifted his head up from the table, letting out an amused, yet fond scoff at George's energetic attitude, "Morning, Georgie."

He sat up after that, yawning as he stretched his arms up above him. Dream's shirt rode up his torso at the action, and George had to forcefully stop himself from salivating at the sight of his exposed skin. It should've been illegal for him to look *that* good. Dream didn't do any sports clubs, hell, he didn't even go to the gym or exercise in his free time- yet he still looked fucking *godly* in George's eyes.

"What's got you in such a good mood today?" Dream asked after a moment, either oblivious to or not caring about George's obvious ogling, "It's a Monday morning, man, it's unnatural to be so happy." He gestured one of his hands to the half-asleep students surrounding them as though to prove his point, "See?"

"Dunno," George hummed, biting the inside of his cheek nervously as his cheeks began to flush slightly in embarrassment, "I just had a good weekend, s'all."

"Hey, I'm not complaining," Dream tittered at him reassuringly. His scent became slightly stronger, curling around George in a way that instantly started to soothe his worries, "You've got a cute smile."

"Yeah?" George chuckled lightly at the compliment, his cheeks suddenly flushing for a *much* different reason. His body relaxed into Dream's scent, not so subtly taking a sharp inhale of it before speaking again, "You think so?"

"Now you're just fishing for compliments," Dream teased through a painful sounding wheeze, "You *know* you're cute, George."

"Maybe," George smirked, and that was all it took for Dream to dissolve into a fit of giggles. George's heart fluttered wildly at the noise, a softer smile overtaking his face as he watched Dream's eyes crinkle up. Absentmindedly, George felt as though he could fall in love right then and there, completely transfixed on the way Dream's body shook with the power behind his laughs.

But that was impossible.

They fell into a comfortable silence when Dream had finally calmed down again, only slightly paying attention to the teacher as they typed out small scripts of code onto their laptops. Despite how much he still wanted to talk to Dream, his studies still came first. Dream seemed to be in a similar boat, his eyes fully concentrated as they scanned the screen in front of him.

George almost zoned out as he let his fingers automatically fly across the keyboard, not needing to be in the moment to know what he was doing. Well, he did, but any mistake he might've made could be fixed later. He snapped back to attention when Dream lightly poked his shoulder a few minutes later, his finger lifting to turn towards the whiteboard projection at the front of the classroom.

"George and Dream," The teacher called monotonously, "You two are together for this project, okay? I'm expecting big things from the both of you. It's due in two months time."

George nodded before he even knew what he was agreeing to, simply wanting the stares of his teacher and unknown classmates to be off of him. Dream was staring at him with a wide grin, looking very much like an excited golden retriever as he turned around on his chair to face him fully. If George focused hard enough, he could almost picture a pair of floppy dog ears sprouting out the top of his head.

At George's dumbfounded expression, Dream let out a loud snort, "You weren't even listening, were you?"

"Not really," George smiled guiltily, "From what I gathered, we're doing a project together?"

"Yeah!" Dream quickly nodded, subconsciously releasing his scent again when he picked up on George's guilt, "We have to create a working plugin for any game of our choosing. If we get it done early, we get extra credit too."

"Oh cool," George sighed, his body relaxing again when he picked up on Dream's comforting scent signals, "So, what game were you thinking?"

"Well, I play a lot of Minecraft," Dream rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly, "I know, I know. It's childish as *fuck* but-

George's infectious happiness returned tenfold at the mention of his favourite game. He didn't even get to hear the rest of Dream's rambling in his excitement, too elated at the idea of someone he cared about having an interest in something he loved. The fact that it was Dream of all people just made it *that* much better, his body quite literally buzzing at the thought of being able to play it with him.

George was aware that getting excited over something so simple might come off as extremely nerdy- but he honestly couldn't find it within himself to care. He'd managed to rope Quackity into playing with him a few times, usually on a big public server like Hypixel, but the shorter man was often too busy to do it more than once a week. As far as George knew, Dream literally had *no* life outside of school, meaning that he'd be available to play a lot.

"I love Minecraft!" George interrupted loudly, wincing at the volume at which he's spoken. Dream's wide-eyed expression and the incredulous stares of the people around him did nothing to help his feelings of embarrassment either. He waited until his classmates had turned back around before saying, "I mean, uh, Minecraft sounds good."

"You have it too?" Dream suddenly beamed so brightly George felt as though he was being blinded by the sun itself, "No way! We've *got* to play together sometime. I normally just chill on a server with the other guys in our group, but I could make another one just for us if you wanted."

George's heart should *not* have started beating wildly in his chest at the offer, nor should his cheeks have gotten as red as they did. God, he really *was* a nerd. It felt too sweet, too domestic for Dream to say so openly. The way he'd said it was very clearly just meant to be a friendly, purely

platonic option in case George wasn't ready to play with a group of people. His Omega, however, decided to take it as though Dream was asking him out on some kind of e-date, preening at the taller man's consideration.

"Y-Your normal server sounds good," George stammered, desperately trying to will away his blush. He accidentally let his Omega side bleed through slightly as he said, "...But I wouldn't mind one for just us either."

"We can do both," Dream simply shrugged, completely oblivious to George's inner turmoil, "Whatever you want."

"Well, what if I want what *you* want?" George countered, suddenly having a weird surge of confidence from Dream's answer. Could this be considered flirting? Probably, but George decided to view it as playful teasing instead. He couldn't let himself start to view Dream romantically, not with everything he had at stake.

"Luckily for you," Dream drawled, meeting George's gaze with a challenging smirk, "I like the sound of both servers too."

Just as George opened his mouth to reply with something *far* too cocky for the situation, the bell signifying the end of class rung. George ended up just rolling his eyes at Dream, who ended up chuckling heartily back. They slowly packed up, chattering lightly to one another as they both swung their respective bags over their shoulders.

"I'll see you at lunch," Dream hummed to him as they walked out into the hallway together, "We can talk about the project then."

George gave him a short nod in return, raising a hand to wave goodbye before making his way to his Spanish lesson.

x-x-x-x-x

Lunch was... strange, to say the least.

Dream was already there when he arrived, not even noticing George's presence as he continued to type text after frantic text out on his phone. Both Karl and Sapnap were absent, their usual seats vacant without a trace of their scents around. Quackity was watching TikToks on his own phone, occasionally leaning over to show one to Bad who would snort quietly.

George hummed in confusion as he sat down next to Dream, raising his voice slightly to gain the younger man's attention. When he eventually turned to face him, George almost gasped. Dream looked considerably more frazzled than he had during Comp-Sci, his hair looking as though he'd been tugging on it in stress and his face having new, noticeable worry lines creasing the corners of his eyes.

"Dream, what's wrong?" George murmured, making sure to keep his voice hushed in case it was something personal that he didn't want the other two hearing, "You look all jittery."

"It's Sapnap, he's-" Dream sighed tiredly, cutting himself off with a tight grimace when his phone made another pinging noise, "...You'll see. He'll be here in a minute."

Just like Dream had said, Sapnap shuffled into the cafeteria only a few minutes later. George didn't really know what to expect from Dream's answer, but the moment he saw the younger man he just *knew*. Sapnap looked like absolute shit- and that was wording it nicely. His stress seemed ten times worse than Dream's own, his body hunched over in tension as he dropped down into his own seat

opposite them.

George had never seen his friend look so lifeless before.

His eyes were dulled and tinted a deep shade of red, very much looking as though he'd just been in a rut or gotten into a fight. His clothes were all dishevelled and messy, almost mismatched with how weirdly pieced together it seemed. His hair looked unkempt and as though he hadn't even bothered with it, tangled knots glaringly obvious against his paler than usual skin. Even Sapnap's prized bandana, the thing he wore everywhere, was sitting carelessly skewiff on the top of his head.

Sapnap's scent was considerably more blunt, smelling almost bitter and unwelcoming as he struggled to reign it in. George almost recoiled at the smell of it, shifting slightly closer to Dream in an attempt to get away from the brunt of it. Dream pushed out more of his own scent to overpower it- something that George was quickly incredibly thankful for.

"Jesus, man," Quackity chuckled weakly from next to him, "Did you get run over or something before coming here? No offence, of course."

Dream was staring at Quackity with wide eyes, quickly shaking his head in an attempt to get him to shut up. George was thoroughly confused at this point. Usually, Sapnap would take Quackity's banter with a pinch of salt, either playfully fighting back or ignoring it altogether. Today, however, Sapnap's eyes just turned a brighter red, a low growl of annoyance rumbling out from his chest.

"Shut the fuck up, Q." Sapnap huffed, shooting the shorter man a 'look' before turning back around to stare down at the table. Quackity recoiled slightly in surprise before it quickly turned to offence. He was about to open his mouth with a defensive retort when Bad swooped in to rescue the situation, his hand gripping Quackity's shoulder tightly in a silent warning.

"What's wrong, Sapnap?" Bad asked gently, his hand falling from Quackity's shoulder once he felt as though the shorter had sufficiently calmed down, "As Quackity was *trying* to say, you really don't look so good."

Sapnap seemed to settle significantly at Bad's voice, his body instantly slumping down against the table. It was no secret that he viewed him like an older brother, having known him almost as long as he'd known Dream. Bad reached past Quackity to pat him on the back soothingly, using his neutral smelling Beta scent to help him relax. Bad was more in control of his instincts than most other students at the school, able to manipulate his scent with ease and help others by doing so.

"It's Karl," Sapnap sighed after a moment, his voice coming out slightly pained, "Well, more specifically his dad."

Everyone but George appeared to clock into the situation at his answer, all wincing slightly at the mention of their bubbly friend's dad. George looked to Dream in confusion, cocking his head to the side as though silently asking what that meant- but Dream just shook his head in response, mouthing a barely legible, 'Not now.' Karl sounded almost as secretive as George- or was just keeping as many secrets from him, at least.

"He came home whilst I was helping Karl with his..." Sapnap trailed off, his gaze flickering to George briefly before continuing, "...Y'know, and went absolutely batshit on us."

"Again?" Bad huffed, a rare frown taking over his expression, "He can't keep doing this."

"Yeah," Sapnap grumbled, putting one of his elbows on the table so he could rest his head on his

hand, "He did the usual song and dance, yelled at me and then him a little before kicking me out. I'm just glad I managed to grab my clothes this time."

"Doesn't he know how much danger he's putting you both in by doing that?" Dream scoffed as he started angrily stabbing the salad in front of him, "Fuck, dude, I wish we could do something."

"If he knows, he doesn't care," Sapnap shrugged. His eyes flashed a brighter red seconds later when his phone started buzzing loudly against the table, quickly grabbing it to read the incoming messages.

George didn't have to be a genius to know who it was.

A small, uncalled for part of him felt angry about being left out. He wanted to help his friends too, but how the hell was he meant to do that when they wouldn't even tell him what was going on? It felt wrong to be feeling so agitated at them when Karl and Sapnap were apparently going through some awful situation- but how could he sympathise when he didn't even know what it was?

The other, larger part of him told him that Karl's secrecy was justified. Shit, it wasn't as though George was a saint in that department either. It was unfair of him to start getting mad at something that he was doing not only to Karl, but to the rest of his friends too. With that in mind, George forced back the frustrated words that threatened to spew out of him, instead forcing on a small smile in hopes to appear comforting.

"Karl's calling," Sapnap abruptly announced as he slid out of his seat. He momentarily turned to face Dream muttering a quick, "If I'm not back by the end of lunch just take my bag to gym with you, okay? I'll meet you there." Before leaving the cafeteria entirely.

The table sat in silence for a few minutes, no one knowing what to say in Sapnap's absence. Any positive moods had been brought down considerably from what they'd been told, and they all felt like it was wrong to start being cheery again after hearing such awful news. George, despite not knowing what was going on, was smart enough to realise that Karl's dad had just fucked something up big time.

"So," Dream started, turning to face George with a tight smile, "Wanna come round mine after school? We can work on the project there."

"Yeah, sure." George blurted before he even really processed what Dream was asking. The moment he did, he froze, mind racing with the endless amount of possibilities. God, this was literally one of the riskiest things he could do. He'd signed himself to go to an Alpha's house, an *attractive* Alpha at that, to sit alone in his room and 'work'.

Maybe he was overexaggerating a little- but he was *nervous*, okay?

"Cool," Dream answered nonchalantly, shooting George another one of his award-winning smiles before turning around towards Bad and Quackity to ask them something.

George was still frozen, trying to ignore his Omega chirping excitedly in his ear. He managed to tune it out by wallowing in self-pity, his anxiety riding over his Omega's anticipation. He would either die from embarrassment or die from being exposed- those were literally the only two things that could go down. George's eyes fluttered shut as he tilted his head back towards the ceiling, silently praying to any God that would listen to not fuck this up for him.

He almost cheered in relief when the bell rang again, quickly picking up his bag to race out the cafeteria. He only stopped when he felt Dream grabbing his shoulder, quickly pausing in place at

the strength behind it. Jesus, just what the fuck did Dream eat? He was *way* too strong for a man that literally never exercised, much less a man in goddamn Comp-Sci class-

"George," Dream rolled his eyes fondly, "Were you *seriously* going to leave without me telling you where to meet me later?"

"You could've just... y'know," George snorted in amusement, waving around the phone in his hand pointedly, "Texted me the details?"

"Oh, right." Dream chuckled back, his cheeks turning a light pink in embarrassment. It was adorable. He continued talking anyway as he batted George's phone hand away, "Meet me in the car park next to the sports field, okay? That's where I've parked."

"Sure," George hummed in agreement, "I'll meet you there."

x-x-x-x-x

The car ride over to Dream's was, surprisingly, not awkward at all.

They blasted music through his weirdly expensive car, singing their hearts out to 2010's pop without a care in the world. Dream almost *definitely* started speeding when 'Shut Up And Drive' by Rihanna came on, taking the song a *little* bit too literal for George's liking. Things got kind of dicey when they raced past a parked cop car (which was thankfully empty), Dream pressing down on the brakes so hard George almost flew out of the car.

It was amazing anyway, though.

Dream promptly turned down their music when they entered a gated neighbourhood, driving a little slower and a lot more careful as they weaved through the very fancy looking cars lining the streets. George gaped when Dream pulled up alongside one of the bigger looking houses, his jaw staying dropped well into entering Dream's house.

It was all shiny floors and grand staircases, thick velvet curtains lining the giant windows alongside the hung up certificates and family portraits. Dream instructed him to take off his shoes and coat, which he took from him very gentleman-like, before leading him upstairs to his bedroom. George had to stop himself from making physical noises of awe at all the posh-people looking items decorated around the hallways.

Dream's bedroom, however, was shockingly *normal*.

George didn't know what to expect when he first entered it, picturing one of those stupid rock climbing walls that rich kids had installed for no reason or some kind of Palace of Versailles type of bedroom. He was pleasantly surprised to see it looking like any other teenage bedroom, if not a bit homier. The first thing he noticed, despite his colourblindness, was the forest green wallpaper on the walls.

Two of his walls were absolutely covered in a mix of hung up items, pictures, posters and strung up fairy lights taking up the majority of the room. There were a few polaroids scattered around the posters too, which George noted fondly mostly consisted of Dream and their other friends. He hoped that one day, he'd make it onto the wall too.

Dream's bed was a regular double bed, messy and unkempt as though he'd just woken up in it. He had a matching green rug on the floor, placed haphazardly between his bed and his wardrobe. Next to the wardrobe was a small bookcase with some memorabilia scattered on top of it, a variety of fidget toys piled together in the corner. A little pet bed was placed next to it, and George could

only assume that it belonged to Patches.

The most impressive thing in Dream's room was definitely his desk, which was pushed into the far corner almost protectively. He had a seriously expensive-looking PC sat on top of it, three monitors set up in a curved position and a microphone. It was then that George noticed the soundproof boards lining the other two walls, blending in enough that he barely saw them.

George's favourite part, though, was just how much it smelt like Dream.

His scent was *everywhere*, covering every object in his room in a thick coat that made George feel all warm inside. His hands twitched with the urge to sink into it, let himself drop to the floor and curl up into a content, purring little ball on Dream's nice looking rug. He knew that he couldn't though- not now or ever. He blinked in surprise when he finally looked back at Dream, almost forgetting the taller man's presence in his observing.

"Is it- I mean, do you like it?" Dream fidgeted nervously. It was definitely a funny sight. Dream *towered* over George, yet here he was, staring down at him like a kicked puppy. He almost seemed embarrassed as he huffed, "I know it's not as cool as the rest of my house, but it's still okay, right?"

George *and* his Omega preened at Dream wanting their reassurance, liking the thought of their approval being needed. George just smiled at him softly, shuffling over to pat Dream's bicep soothingly, "I think this might be my favourite room in the *whole* place"

"Really?" Dream's mouth parted in shock for a moment before switching into a massive grin, "I think so too."

"I didn't know you were rich," George spoke out loud, watching as Dream shut the door behind him, "Like, at all."

"I know- that was kinda the point," Dream snorted. He turned back around to face George, "My mum works in business, and my dad's a politician. I make a fair bit doing my own stuff, too."

George nodded, still in a slight state of awe. He reluctantly let go of his arm when Dream started pulling away to sit down on the floor, pulling his school laptop out of his bag. George quickly moved to copy him, choosing to sit opposite him so that they could still see each other's faces properly. There was quiet as they both longed onto the school network and Dream's WIFI, downloading the needed coding programs and Minecraft itself with ease.

"Any ideas of what you wanna code?" George hummed as he logged into his Minecraft account, "Like, should it affect the gameplay, or act as some kind of modding client itself?"

"Gameplay would be kinda sick, I think," Dream answered after thinking it through, "I've seen a few videos on YouTube where they change how mobs work and then make all these crazy challenges out of it. We could do something like that?"

"I'm down," George returned with an air of fake casualness. Inside, he was freaking out. *Of course* he'd seen those kinds of videos too, shit, they were basically all he watched in his spare time- but he didn't want to come off as even geekier towards Dream, so he tried to make himself seem nonchalant, "What specifically were you thinking?"

The two talked code for almost an hour, barely noticing the time flying by as they got caught up in work. There were little disagreements along the way, sure, but they quickly overcame them in their desire to finish as quickly as possible. Dream, George quickly found out, was competitive as fuck- constantly challenging him to speed-typing tests whenever they needed a small break.

Dream eventually decided he wanted to test out the part of the plugin they'd finished, discreetly buying another server without George's knowledge to test it on. He knew that George most likely wouldn't care, but he hated flaunting his money around like it was nothing. Dream would've just used the server he already had with his other friends, but they'd kill him if he accidentally made the world corrupted from shitty code.

"What's your username?" Dream inquired as he set up the server, "I'll whitelist you."

"GeorgeNotFound," George hesitantly answered. His face quickly burned a bright red when Dream lifted his head to stare at him, one of his perfect eyebrows raised in curious amusement, "I work as a freelance coder in my free time, as you know. So I merged my name with my job, and decided on the 404 error, y'know? 404 meaning 'not found'? I dunno, I thought it was funny-"

"George," Dream interrupted him with a laugh, "I get it, okay? You're right, it's funny."

George let out an inaudible sigh of satisfaction, smiling up at Dream gratefully before hopping onto Minecraft. He typed carefully when Dream read out the server IP, his slender fingers quickly spelling it out before finally joining. They tested their plugin for roughly half an hour, nearly collapsing in relief when it worked the first time. There were still adjustments and tweaks to be made if they wanted it to be perfect, but it'd do for now.

They quickly got bored of doing schoolwork, though, not when the opportunity to actually have fun was present. They exchanged Discord usernames, Dream quickly adding George to the group chat he and their other friends already had before creating a private chat between just them. They then messed around on Minecraft for a while, Dream adding him to and then showing George around the group's server.

A loud meow gathered both of their attention, and George almost made an 'awwing' noise when he realised what it was. Dream had very enthusiastically shown off pictures of Patches within their second Comp-Sci lesson, talking non-stop about her for almost the entire duration of the class. To meet something Dream loved so much made George's heart swell in joy.

"Patches," Dream cooed back, his voice instantly turning childish in an attempt to gain her attention, "C'mere, baby."

Patches did as she was told, ignoring George with nothing more than a curious sniff in favour of walking over to her owner. Dream curled one of his large hands under her stomach, effortlessly picking her up to nuzzle their faces together. He pulled away to press a kiss to the top of her head before putting her down on the floor again.

"You wanna say hi to Georgie?" Dream made a fake gasping noise, turning her around so that she was facing the shorter man. Patches, very slowly, made her way over to George, staring up at him with wide eyes that almost rivalled his own as she sniffed him again.

"Hi, pretty kitty," George giggled, carefully reaching out one of his hands to stroke down her back. When she made no effort to get away, he very carefully picked her up, almost crying when she just snuggled into his arms. Dream was softly laughing at his reaction, his voice dripping with fondness as he watched his cat and his best friend snuggle each other.

Discreetly, he pulled out his phone from his jean pocket, flicking to the camera before quickly taking several photos. He put it away again before George could notice, feeling only the slightest ounce of guilt for not asking first. When George turned to face him with the largest smile he'd ever seen on the older man, his smaller hands cupping Patches' body protectively- Dream almost ascended right then and there.

George looked fucking *adorable*.

"Cute," Dream murmured as such, the word coming out so quiet George didn't even hear it. Patches eventually grew annoyed by all the fussing, promptly squirming out of George's grasp to saunter over to her bed. They both watched her go with matching amused smiles, Dream shaking his head knowingly. She was one sassy cat, that was for sure.

The energy between them felt all soft and warm, both men fully relaxed and comfortable around each other. It was quiet, too, the music Dream had been playing through his Alexa having switched off when they'd done their first code test run. Despite all of that, there was still this underlying tension- simmering beneath the surface in a way that curled pleasantly in their stomachs.

Dream knew George was pretty, fuck, it was one of the first things he'd noticed when they'd first met- yet under his soft bedroom light, George looked almost *ethereal*. The smile from before still hadn't left George's face, contrasting beautifully against the seemingly permanent light flush to his cheeks and the gentle glow to his skin. He'd have to be an idiot to not think George was one of the most beautiful men he'd ever seen.

George himself wasn't faring much better. Dream seemed to be basking in whatever he was thinking about, his eyes staring at him with such warmth that he felt like melting into a pile of goo right then and there. The younger man was shining under the fairy lights, the piercings lining his ears glinting temptingly whenever he shifted. George had never really cared for shiny things before, but Dream was simply magnetising in every sense of the word.

The laptops had been pushed far out the way when Patches had first entered the room, leaving a meter or so of distance between them. Dream, for some inexplicable reason, suddenly felt the urge to close it. He didn't even realise what he was doing before it was too late, his hand stretching over the empty space to cup George's cheek.

"Dream?" George mumbled in confusion, his eyes wide behind his glasses as his head very hesitantly leant into the touch. He himself didn't know what he was doing, the warning bells in his head completely tuned out by the pleased purrs his Omega was letting out. George could only hope that they weren't audible to Dream and that if they were, they'd be blamed on Patches.

"Georgie," Dream murmured back, his hand gliding a little further up to tuck a stray curl behind George's ear. It was his thumb that slid back down, ever so gently swiping under the eye that he knew was blue. George's breath stuttered a little at the touch, causing Dream's brain to short-circuit temporarily. Fuck, he wanted to hear that noise forever.

"What're you doing?" George's voice dropped into a whisper, his arms bending back to plant his hands firmly on the floor behind him. Dream was leaning in closer and closer, and in turn, George was slowly falling down. Shakily, one of his hands lifted up again to cup Dream's own cheek, marveling at the softness of it. It was the first time he'd touched the taller man in a way that wasn't accidental, and it felt *electric*.

"You..." Dream trailed off, trying to rack his head for a plausible answer through the misty fog in his head. It only got worse when George touched him back, any coherent thought he had flying out the window. He didn't even notice when George had fully fallen back against the rug, his brown hair splayed beautifully against the dark green.

"Me?" George breathed, his hand drifting further to curl around the back of his neck, deliberately tempting him even closer, "What about me?"

Dream had dropped his touch from George's face, both his hands bracketing his head against the

rug instead. George's legs had spread slightly in return, giving him room to kneel in between them. It would be so *easy* to grind his hips down, to hear that breathless little noise from before fall from George's lips again- but he couldn't, not now.

Dream bent his head down, eyeing the way George was nibbling on his lower lip hungrily. He wanted to tug that lip into his own mouth, bite down on it with his sharp fangs until George was a whimpering little mess. He lowered his head a bit further, and if he were more coherent, he would've noticed the gold colour of George's eyes from beneath his skewed glasses.

"You're beautiful," Dream confessed, his voice hushed to keep the little trance they were in safe. George let out a quiet gasp at the words, his back arching slightly as his cheeks burned even redder. Dream was sure his eyes were red by now, the fog he was in feeling way too similar to that of his Alpha haze. Yet he couldn't bring himself to stop, not when George looked so tempting beneath him.

George made a needy noise in the back of his throat when Dream bent his head down even further, his fingers curling tightly in the golden hairs at the nape of Dream's neck. Dream took that as his go-ahead sign, continuing to bend until his lips were ghosting over George's own. He could feel the smaller man's warm, desperate puffs of air against his mouth, and the urge to kiss him until he was breathless grew even stronger.

Just as Dream was about to finally press their lips together, a squeaky, boisterous voice cut through the tension like a butcher's knife, "Dream! Are you home?"

They barely had time to react before the owner of the voice barged into Dream's bedroom uncaringly, his door slamming back against the green walls with a loud bang. George couldn't see who it was from underneath Dream, but from the way the red had all but evaporated out of Dream's eyes- he imagined it couldn't be good. Dream stayed covering George's body almost protectively, shielding him from whoever was on the opposite side of the room.

"Mom!" The voice yelled again, several times louder this time. It sounded amused, though, almost childish in the way it spoke, "Dream's got a boy in his room- *and* he's on top of him!"

Dream stood up at that, his own voice filled with a mix of embarrassment and fury as he shouted back, "Drista, get the fuck out of my room! You know you have to knock first."

George was still lying in a boneless heap on the floor, still trying to catch his breath from the previous events. What the hell *was* that? He'd... he'd almost given himself away, just like that. After listening to several more minutes of screaming between both Dream, the girl he could only assume was his little sister and Dream's mom- he'd had enough. He stood up on jelly-like legs, ignoring the way Dream's head instantly snapped towards him.

George quickly packed up his laptop, swinging his backpack over his shoulder as he got ready to leave. He stared down at the floor, refusing to meet Dream's gaze as he murmured a bit shakily, "I- I think it's best if I leave, yeah? Let you handle your family yourself."

"Wait, no- George," Dream frantically stammered, immediately moving back over to him with an outstretched arm ready to grab him. He looked heartbroken when George flinched away from his touch, murmuring a pitiful, "Georgie, *please*."

What were we even just doing?

George ignored him again, the anxiety in his chest starting to thrum into his veins like a drug. He needed to leave, and fast. He sped out of Dream's room, pretending like he didn't hear the taller

man's heavy footsteps behind him as he all but jogged down the giant staircase. Dream's mom was stood at the bottom of it, hands on her hips as though ready to scold them both.

What the fuck just happened?

"Dream, you know you're not allowed-" She started, pausing only when she took in George's anxious, dishevelled state. She gently reached a hand out towards him, worry etching across her features, "Oh, honey. Are you okay?"

"I'm fine, thank you," George hurriedly answered, letting her touch him for a moment before shuffling past her to the shoe rack. He slid on his trainers with ease, once again ignoring the families hushed whispers and hisses behind him. He grabbed his coat too, bundling it up in the same arm that his bag was on before turning to face Dream's mom again, "It was lovely meeting you, I'm sorry that it was so brief, though. Thank you for having me-"

How could he be so fucking careless?

"George," Dream interrupted, his tone laced with panicked concern, "Shit, I just- how're you going to get home?"

"Don't worry about it," George muttered, the anxiety slowly started to infect his mind. His Omega was whimpering loudly in distress and- Fuck, he just *really* needed to get out of here. He met Dream's eyes briefly, holding back a wince at the absolute mess of emotions he saw in there before murmuring, "See you at school, Dream."

He almost fucked everything up.

And with that, George quickly raced out of the house, not turning around to see the devastated expression on Dream's face. Tears pricked at the corners of his eyes as his anxiety hit an all-time high, his breath coming out in short, desperate gasps as he frantically unlocked his phone. Without even second-guessing it, he called the number on his speed-dial, hands shaking as he waited for them to pick up.

"Q-Quackity?" George stuttered through his uneven inhales of air, "Can you come pick me up, please?"

*He **has** fucked everything up.*

Chapter End Notes

ahhhh i had so much fun writing this chapter <3 i hope you enjoyed, and thank you (as always) for your love and support! it means the world to me :]

for those who get anxious about angst, i promise the story has a happy ending!!
george's reaction to what happened was because of an anxiety attack about his second gender, and not because he's mad or upset with dream! it'll all be cleared up in the next few chapters <3 stay safe, and i love you all

eight

Chapter Summary

The aftermath of the almost-kiss, Sapnap is a Good Friend part 2, and George and Karl go out for ice cream.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George had almost dropped to the ground in relief when Quackity had immediately agreed to pick him up.

He didn't have to wait for him for very long, too. Within only fifteen minutes of George calling, Quackity was parked up outside the gate that led into Dream's neighbourhood, honking his shitty old car the moment he caught sight of him. George flushed when the security guard raised an unimpressed eyebrow up at him at the noise, muttering a quiet apology to him before rushing over to get in.

Quackity took one look at George's miserable face and instantly turned down the music playing through his speakers, having been well acquainted with George's panic attacks by now. He knew to never push and ask what had caused them- not until George was calm again, at least. There were times where that rule had to be overlooked, such as that one time in Freshman year when his anxiety had become so high he almost passed out, but that was rare in itself.

George, once comfortable inside the car, instantaneously slumped down into his seat. His head was pounding with a mix of his Omega screaming at him and a tension headache, his breathing still wasn't back to normal and the tears just wouldn't stop flowing from behind his glasses. In summary, he was a *mess*. He couldn't even begin to imagine how Dream was feeling, especially since George had basically abandoned him to deal with his family himself.

It didn't really help that his phone was blowing up with texts either. George knew without looking who the majority of them were coming from, and his heart panged painfully at the thought of Dream anxiously spam messaging him. He caught a glimpse of some very strongly worded ones from Sapnap, too, and George couldn't find it within himself to be mad at Dream for having told his best friend. He was about to do the same, after all.

"So," Quackity drawled once he sensed George's breathing start to regulate, his finger tapping rhythmically against the steering wheel, "Are we gonna talk about it?"

"Talk about what?" George answered, internally wincing at just how stupid he must've looked saying that. There was no reason to straight-up lie to him, not when he could just cut out the main reasoning behind his panic attack.

"Don't even *try* that bullshit with me, George," Quackity sighed, "You look like shit, so obviously *something* happened."

"Thanks," George snorted a little self-deprecatingly. He knew it was true, though, and quickly brought a hand up to his face to wipe away the tear tracks staining his cheeks. After a moment or

two he spoke again, his voice a little shaky with leftover nerves, "I messed up, Q."

Quackity went silent again at that, and George knew he was thinking over what to say. Moments like this made him extremely thankful to have such a caring best friend, one that could coddle him *or* call him out on his bullshit depending on what he needed. Right now, George very much craved the codling- but knew that Quackity would give him whatever he thought was best.

"Okay..." Quackity finally hummed, "What did you do? Just be honest with me."

"I almost kissed Dream," George mumbled, his eyes cast downwards as he fidgeted with a loose thread on the hem of his sweater. He lifted his gaze momentarily, only to see Quackity's own wide eyes staring back at him.

Without him even noticing, the car had been pulled into an empty rest stop. George sighed once he realised he wasn't getting out of this with an explanation, and so very briefly recounted the events that had occurred beforehand. Quackity's eyes seemed to get wider with each sentence until George came to the end, in which they narrowed in confusion.

"What's the problem with that, though?" Quackity questioned warily. At George's deadpan expression, he started to explain himself, "I'm just saying, dude! It's obvious he likes you back, *especially* since he's the one who instigated it in the first place."

"Because I feel like I'm accidentally leading him on," George smiled sadly, "I don't want to hurt him, but I feel like I already have. Jesus Q, I even promised Sap that I wouldn't."

"Leading him on?" Quackity repeated, somehow sounding even *more* confused than before, "Wait, you don't want to be with him? I thought you liked him?"

"I do," George murmured in reply as hot, frustrated tears started pricking the corners of his eyes, "Fuck, I *really* do, but I can't be with him."

They fell into another brief silence at that, neither man really knowing what to say to the other. It was the first time George had genuinely admitted his attraction to Dream to both himself and someone else, and it was messing with his head. If he'd continued on forcefully believing like he didn't like Dream in that way at all, he could at least pretend like the notion of not being able to be with him wasn't tearing his heart into two.

It seemed with each passing day that George's control on himself was slipping, both with his feelings and his second gender. Even through the Omega fog he'd gotten back at Dream's, the unaffected parts of him still very much wanted to kiss the taller boy. George a year ago wouldn't have even entertained the idea of kissing someone, much less an Alpha.

George was fucking up in more ways than one, and he had no clue as to how to handle it.

"Is it because of the whole... *gay* thing again?" Quackity carefully inquired, "Because you *know* that no one that matters gives two shits about it, dude. You shouldn't care so much about what others think anyway."

"I know," George sighed, his eyes fluttering shut as he leant back against his chair. There was no point in reacting anymore than that, not when he couldn't tell Quackity the whole truth. He continued talking in his friend's silence, "Sapnap gave me that speech a couple of weeks ago, and I'm grateful, y'know? But bad thinking habits are just hard to drop, I guess, and they aren't going to change any time soon."

"I know, Quackity quietly quoted him back, "Just think about it, yeah? If you do decide to ever

come out, you know we'll all have your back."

"Thank you," George smiled gratefully, his hand reaching across the armrest to squeeze Quackity's own, "The same goes for you too, alright? None of us are ever going to judge you."

"Yeah," Quackity chuckled, squeezing his hand back, "Thanks."

The rest of the car journey home was a lot lighter after that, Quackity having turned the radio back up to drown out their thoughts. There were definitely things still left unsaid, things that definitely *needed* to be said- but they could wait. Quackity didn't push his feelings about Dream any further after their talk, and George let himself focus off of them for a moment in return. It was peaceful and safe, and exactly what George needed.

X-X-X-X-X

After the 'kiss incident', as he liked to refer to it as, George had started avoiding Dream.

It had started off small with George ignoring his calls and texts over the weekend, the incident having taken place on a Friday, but it eventually blew up into a completely shitty situation. School had become awkward to the point where George had even changed where he sat at lunch, swapping seats with Bad so he could sit next to Quackity. The glower he got from Sappnap almost sent him running for the hills, but the supportive hand Quackity kept on his knee forced him to stay.

Dream's heartbroken expression certainly didn't help either.

He couldn't bring himself to meet the eyes of the younger man, no matter how hard he tried. Whenever he did, he'd just get glimpses of Dream leaning over him, his bright red eyes staring down at his lips like a starved man. Hell, George couldn't even look at Dream's *hands* for fear of being reminded of the gentle, tender way he'd touched George's face.

Another reason he'd moved away from him was because of how unpleasant his scent had become. Usually, George absolutely basked in Dream's scent, going as far as to inhale the damned thing like a drug. But *now*? Now George had to stop himself from physically recoiling away from it. It smelt of burnt sandalwood and polluted beaches, and George could almost feel the ashes clogging up his lungs whenever he breathed it in.

In Comp-Sci, however, George wasn't so lucky. He and Dream still had their project to work on, one that only brought in reminders of what had taken place in Dream's house. Dream had perked up when he saw George enter class that Monday morning, but any hopeful look in his eyes had immediately faded away when George ignored him.

He'd tried talking him in the lesson, too. Pleading murmurings every few minutes of, "George, *please*." were promptly ignored, leaving Dream wilting at his desk like some kind of dying flower. The few times George *had* spoken to him were about the project, specifically asking Dream to check certain lines of code or to test something out.

Dream's kicked puppy expression was lethal to the most apathetic of men, so whenever George caught a glimpse of it, he quickly felt himself starting to die a little inside. He absolutely hated the fact that he was the one to have caused his downtrodden expression, wanting nothing more than to see Dream's blinding smile again. Shit, George would even take one of Dream's 'annoying' wheezes at this point.

Another week passed by of George's avoidance, and things seemed to only get worse each day.

He'd had to start avoiding their lunch table altogether, Sapnap's glare scaring him to the point of genuinely running away. Quackity had gone with him, of course, his loyalty to his best friend outweighing anything else. He hadn't meant for the whole ignoring thing to have gone on for so long, but it just felt too... *awkward* to stop, especially with the giant fuss he'd already made.

Things finally came to a close when Sapnap cornered him after soccer practice on a Tuesday two weeks later, his thunderous expression instantly preventing George from leaving. He'd grabbed the back of George's training shirt, quite literally dragging him over to one of the empty bench tables before unceremoniously dropping him down.

"Talk," Sapnap ordered, his tone completely cold and serious, "Why the hell are you avoiding him?"

"How much did he tell you?" George countered, cowering away from Sapnap slightly once he caught sight of the red tinge to his eyes, "I don't want to repeat anything."

"I know that you almost kissed," Sapnap answered truthfully, "And that you ran out the house panicking afterward. He blames himself, y'know? Thinks he's ruined everything he had with you because of it."

"What?" George's eyes widened, "Why the fuck would he think that? *I'm* the one ruining it all, not him."

"I know, that's what I told him." Sapnap snorted cruelly. George couldn't even defend himself, though, he knew he deserved the mean treatment. Sapnap continued talking at his lack of response, "So why are you? Ruining everything, that is. You told me you liked him back, bro, so what's the fucking problem?"

Sapnap's voice was getting angrier and angrier in built-up hurt and annoyance, and George was starting to slip. His Omega was whined loudly internally in distress at being yelled at, causing him to wince and curl into himself. He didn't deserve any pity or sympathy, not after the shit he'd done- but it still hurt. Sapnap was one of his greatest friends, after all.

Out of nowhere, Karl swooped in, rescuing George like some kind of angel from above. He placed his painted nails soothingly on Sapnap's bicep, softly rubbing small circles into the skin through his t-shirt. The touch would've looked sweet if George couldn't very clearly see the way that Karl was actually holding Sapnap back from punching him.

"Babe," Karl hummed, "Leave him alone, alright? We haven't heard his side of the story yet."

Sapnap paused at that, turning to face his somewhat boyfriend with a puzzled expression before staring back down at George. He thought it over for a moment before huffing in agreement, raising an eyebrow at George in a way that signified that he should start talking again. George shivered at the look, averting his own gaze to his muddy trainers as a distraction.

"...I was scared, okay?" George muttered nervously. It was the truth in more ways than one, which helped to slightly ease his heavy guilt. He tilted his head back up, eyes flitting between Karl and Sapnap's individually unreadable expressions, "I was scared of getting hurt, and in turn hurting him. I guess I've already done that though, haven't I?"

"You have," Sapnap agreed, sounding void of any kind of recognizable emotion, "You fucked up, George."

"I know, alright? I know I've fucked up big time," George snapped, instantly hunching back in on

himself when Karl looked at him with a warning in his eyes, "I don't know how to make it better, or what I can even *begin* to do to try and fix this."

"Talking helps," Sapnap answered pointedly, "Y'know, something you two *should've* done the day it happened in the first place."

"Sapnap," Karl huffed, whacking his arm lightly in annoyance. He turned back towards George with an understanding smile, "I get it, dude, but Sap's right. You can only fix this through talking."

"But how?" George cried helplessly, "It's this *stupid* fucking repetitive cycle of something happening, me freaking out and then us *not* talking. This is just going to happen again and again until-"

"Then decide," Sapnap interrupted, his voice finally having an edge of firm seriousness to it, "Decide whether or not you want to stay as friends or be more. That's the problem, right? You don't want to cross that line, despite having feelings for him, and so you keep getting caught up in this bullshit cycle. It's obvious what Dream wants, but you need to give him a firm yes or no, George. No more of this pussyng around, yeah?"

"...Yeah," George slowly nodded as he processed his words, "You're right, thank you."

Sapnap looked slightly more relaxed at his agreement, letting his guard down slightly as he watched George with sad eyes. To be honest, George looked as physically shit as Dream did- and he didn't doubt for a second that they were in similar mental states too. He felt slightly guilty for being so harsh with George, who was already fragile, but he couldn't let this go on any longer.

"Take your time thinking about it, okay?" Sapnap sighed, moving to sit down on the bench next to him, "Just not *too* long. We miss you, man."

"I miss you guys too," George sighed, and after a short nod from Sapnap, shuffled to place his head on the younger man's shoulder, "So much."

Karl watched them both fondly, letting out an almost silent giggle when he noticed Sapnap not so subtly scent-marking George again. He'd been gone long enough that he only really had tinges of Quackity to his normally bland scent, and it was clearly aggravating Sapnap's Alpha. George let him nuzzle against him without complaints, his eyes fluttering shut at the gentle touch instead.

George was too emotional to be concerned over having an Alpha so close to his scent gland.

He tilted his head to the side slowly, giving Sapnap more room to brush up against his neck with a content sigh. Scent-marking was usually only done between very close friends or family, but could also be done to help calm someone down or make them feel close again. In this case, it was both of those things. Dream's group functioned much like a pack anyway, an old tradition that was rarely done in modern times.

A pack usually consisted of people you considered 'yours', both platonically and romantically. The bond could be affirmed through biting, but most of the time it worked well enough without the physical markings. George only really had his friends, having not seen his parents for so long that it felt wrong to consider them a part of something so precious.

Sapnap viewed George as one of 'his' special people, and so the urge to scent-mark him was understandable. George couldn't deny that he'd missed smelling like his friends, missed the security and comfort that came with being covered in it. He especially missed Dream's but he knew that it would be a while until he got to have that again.

George shivered in a mix of surprise and anxiety when Sapnap's nose brushed firmly against his gland, fighting the urge to push the younger man off in fear that he might get upset again. Scenting required you to tap into your second gender a little more, and so Sapnap was more Alpha than himself right now. Thankfully, Karl picked up on his hesitance, quickly grabbing Sapnap's attention by leaning over to pet his head.

"C'mon baby," Karl crooned calmly, "You're gonna drown him in your scent at this rate, you gotta pull back a little."

Sapnap did as he was told, backing away from George's neck to lean into Karl's touch instead. Honestly, it was like the two Alphas of their group were just a pair of oversized puppies with how they reacted to everything. Karl played with his hair for a little while longer before turning to face George, eyes twinkling with something George couldn't quite make out.

"I know it's like, *freezing* right now," Karl laughed, his grin only getting wider at George's dumbfounded expression, "But I'm kinda craving ice cream. Wanna come with?"

x-x-x-x-x

The ice-cream parlor wasn't exactly what George was expecting it to be.

It was very small and quaint, nestled safely in between a charity shop and barbers in a part of town George had never explored before. It was cute, though, decorated all vintage-like with the proper red, vintage booths, and everything else. They sat right by the window, giving George the opportunity to stare out at all the new people and buildings surrounding him.

The parlor was empty too, something that immensely comforted George. He avoided crowds or places that were busy like the plague, hating the way they made him feel trapped. Luckily, he and Karl were the only two people around, the only other person being the old shopkeeper. He had hearing problems anyway according to Karl, something that shouldn't have needed to be said but was anyway.

Karl had ordered for them both, explaining that he knew what was the best in the place and wanted to make sure George's first time there was a success. George couldn't say no to him, not with the blinding smile Karl was shooting at him when he spoke. They'd made idle chatter as they waited for their orders, discussing topics ranging from classes to their friends, to even brief glimpses of home life.

"Oh, that's right!" George exclaimed when Karl had brought up school, "You were off a few weeks ago, weren't you? Were you sick? You looked really ill the few days before you disappeared."

"Mm," Karl nodded, his eyes flickering with something unreadable once more, "I guess you could say that. Why? Did someone say something to you?"

"No," George quickly backtracked, "No one said anything, actually, that's why I was asking."

The silence they fell into was kind of awkward after that, George not knowing what else he could say without sounding weird and Karl tensing up in something akin to nerves. Thankfully, the old man came over with their ice creams just as the silence almost became unbearable, handing them over wordlessly before shuffling into the staffroom.

Karl watched as George took a careful first scoop of ice cream, eyes completely trained on his expression as he put the small spoon into his mouth. George's eyes widened in surprise at the delicious burst of flavor it gave, and he quickly dug in for more. Karl sat there, looking a mix of

smug and stunned. George would've been more concerned if he wasn't focused on eating his heart out.

"Imma keep it real with you, George," Karl spoke after a couple more minutes, surprising George enough to make him stop eating mid-bite, "I know, okay?"

"Know?" George repeated in confusion, his eyebrows furrowing from behind his ice-cream pot, "Know what?"

Karl went quiet again at that, scanning George's face for any signs of a lie. It was a fair enough thing for him to do, especially with how flighty George was when it came to answering questions. When he found nothing other than genuine confusion, he giggled, the sound coming out so amused that it startled George slightly. Still giggling, he took his own scoop of ice cream, holding it up to his mouth in wait.

"George," Karl repeated, sliding the spoon into his mouth. He didn't say anything else until he'd swallowed his mouthful, pulling the spoon out of his mouth again with an audible 'pop'. Just as he reached down for another scoop, he abruptly paused, tilting his head towards George with gold-tinted eyes and a knowing smile, "*I know*."

George was frozen.

Every part of his being felt like he'd been covered in ice, his heart beating so wildly in his chest that it felt like it might just fall out. Karl had just looked at him with golden eyes- fucking *golden*. A trait specifically reserved for Omegas. Even worse, he'd said he 'knew' something, and George could only begin to guess what that meant.

George took a deep, shaky inhale before humming, "So... you're an Omega?"

Karl quickly nodded, not bothering to conceal his eyes anymore as he dug into his ice cream. Why the fuck was he being so *casual* about this? This would be George's worst nightmare if the roles were reversed. Something still felt off, though. There was another thing Karl wasn't telling him, and it was making him nervous as shit.

"What do you mean by 'you know', Karl?" George asked, his voice coming out a little colder than he'd intended for it too.

"It means that I know, George," Karl supplied unhelpfully, eyeing George in confusion. When he realized that George actually didn't understand, he quickly dropped his spoon, turning to face George with the most serious expression he'd ever seen on the taller man, "I know that you're an Omega too."

"You-" George blinked in shock, his clammy hands shaking from where he'd slammed them down on the table, "You don't know what you're talking about. Me? An Omega? Don't be ridiculous."

His breath had started coming out in short, hyperventilating pants rather than the calm, languid breaths he'd had before. He'd... he'd actually been found out. George had gone nineteen years without telling *anyone*, and the first person to ever find out was a boy he'd met less than half a year ago. Some smaller, uglier part of him resented the fact that Karl had brought it up. He was so, so close to leaving school without anyone finding out, and now everything had changed.

"George..." Karl spoke very carefully, his own eyebrows furrowing in concern. His ice cream was pushed aside in favor of focusing on his now freaking-out friend, "George, it's okay, okay? I'm the only one that knows, you're secret is safe."

The panic only settled slightly at that, his inner Omega still whimpering in fear at the thought of having been found out. Karl reached an arm across the table, one of his painted hands seeking out George's own shaking one to intertwine their fingers. George calmed a little more at the affection, letting Karl's squeezing help to ground him.

"You're okay," Karl cooed quietly, fighting back a frown when he felt George shiver nervously, "I promise you're okay, George. Nothing bad's happening, see? You're safe. Can you try to follow my breathing for me?"

George did as he was told, watching how Karl inhaled and exhaled in a strict routine before copying him. He slowly started to feel better, the death grip he had on Karl's hand easing up with each circuit of practiced breathing. Even when George had calmed down again, Karl never let go of his hand- something that he felt immensely grateful for.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Karl hummed. After no response from George, he delved a little into his own backstory, "I was just like you, y'know? I had a strict regime of pills that I took daily, never let anyone touch me or get too close, and was almost always miserable. It's only been within the last year or two that I've started being myself again, and I've never been happier."

"Your scent," George murmured through careful breaths, "Why'd you have no scent, then?"

Something dark flashed through Karl's eyes briefly at the question before they flickered back to their new gold color, "My dad works high up in the military, so he's stricter and more traditional than most parents. He made me start taking military-grade scent blockers when I started high school, and *still* makes me take them now. They block out everything, even the smallest hint of scent."

"Jesus Karl," George whispered in horror, "I'm so sorry."

"It's fine. I can stop taking them as soon as I leave for college anyway," Karl shook his head, a small, sad smile gracing his face, "I'm just glad I got to stop taking my suppressants. They made me feel *awful*."

"You can say that again," George snorted, finally starting to relax a little. It actually felt nice to have someone he could talk to, even better that said someone could relate to his problems. It was then that George realized just how long it had been since he'd last spoken about his gender to anyone, and how much the weight of that secret had been weighing him down.

Unsurprisingly, George burst out crying.

Realistically he knew that he should've been absolutely shitting himself. He should've been angry or upset or literally *anything* that could be used to describe a negative feeling- yet all he felt was mentally several times lighter.

He felt so, so relieved- yet so fucking terrified. Everything in his life was at stake, yet he'd never felt so much relief before. His tears were a mix of happiness and sadness, both types burning his cheeks as they streamed down them. Karl looked rightfully alarmed, instantly hopping out of his booth to slid into George's to wrap one of his arms around him.

"Fuck, I'm sorry," George sobbed, letting his head drop onto Karl's shoulder. The fuzzy yellow sweater he was wearing made him want to cry harder, the color looking far too reminiscent of the golden eyes both he and his friend sported, Karl nuzzled against his hair, urging him to continue speaking, "I'm just so fucking *relieved*."

"Me too," Karl sighed happily, "You're not alone anymore, okay George? I'm here for you now. You don't have to do this on your own anymore."

"Neither do you," George affirmed, almost frowning at the way Karl tensed at his words, "I know you've told the others, and you have them too- but I *get* you, you know? You have another... *Omega* to talk to about stuff now."

"You don't have to say it like that," Karl huffed out a light laugh. At George's confused hum, he carried on talking, "Like, you don't have to say 'Omega' as if it's a curse word."

"It kind of is for me," George snorted lightly, "I don't let myself think about it, let alone say the words out loud. If I live life as a Beta, then I can almost pretend I'm not an Omega at all. I don't want other people to know, but I also don't really want to acknowledge it myself."

"You're one *strange* little man, Gogmeister," Karl teased, making a fake whimper of pain when George poked him in the ribs in retaliation. He turned serious again moments later, tugging George a little closer into the hug, "You know you can tell our friends, right? Like, y'know they won't care- if anything they'll love you even more for it... *especially* Dream."

"You can't tell anyone, okay?" George ignored the Dream tease, instead turning around in his arms so they were face to face. He looked directly into Karl's eyes through his glasses, hands moving to grip Karl's shoulders tightly, "I mean it, Karl. You can't even *hint* at it."

"I won't, I promise," Karl reassured him, relaxing only when George's guard finally went down. Very carefully, he put the tip of his finger under the rim of George's glasses, "Can I see your eyes? It's okay if not, it'd just be nice to have that kind of confirmation."

George only smiled softly, batting Karl's eyes away to lift the glasses himself. He pulled them off completely, placing them on the table before spinning back around to face his friend. With a deep breath of determination, George let his eyes bleed into their unfamiliar golden colour, watching in curious amazement as Karl's did the same thing back.

It was unlike a feeling he'd ever had before. Something was just... clicking into place, feeling both so right and so wrong at the same time. He imagined the wrongness came from his underlying shame and guilt at having been found out, but he brushed it off. It was incredible, though. He could quite literally feel his bond with Karl growing deeper and warmer from their new interaction.

It was like they were finally recognizing one another for the first time. They'd both been having suspicions about the other, and now that they'd been cleared, up they felt closer than ever. Both boys smiled at each other softly before bursting out into loud giggles, gleeful at the new connection they shared. George slumped forward into Karl's arms, letting the taller man embrace him properly.

George subconsciously snuggled into the crook of Karl's neck, rubbing their scent glands together. It wouldn't do anything since neither man actually had a distinct scent, but it's the thought that counts. Karl's arms were curled loosely around George's waist, and George's own were wrapped around Karl's torso. It was kind of awkward in the position they were sat in, but felt perfect to them nonetheless.

"What is this?" George hummed after a moment, "This feeling, I mean. I dunno, I suddenly feel super close to you."

"This happened when I told our other friends too, just not as intense," Karl answered honestly, "I think it's because we're both Omegas? Gender solidarity, maybe. It's like we're finally recognizing

each other because neither of us is lying to the other anymore."

"Oh, cool." George quipped, sinking further into Karl's hold. It had been so long since he had been hugged properly and not in some fleeting, 'bro-hug' kind of way. It wasn't a secret that George was touch-starved, and so to be held so protectively by Karl felt incredible. Suddenly, a question came to mind, "How did you know?"

"Do you want the reasons listed A-Z?" Karl snorted before shaking his head, "You just reminded me a lot of myself at first, but you're just way more anxious about it. I think it was kind of a giveaway when that thing in the cafeteria happened-"

"Oh God, please don't remind me," George flushed in embarrassment, "I never want to think about that again."

The two chatted away for a couple more hours, only separating from their hug when the shopkeeper came back out to yell at them for their PDA. They decided it was time to leave at that, binning their melted ice creams before sliding into Karl's car. George had a renewed sense of confidence after the whole affair, feeling slightly stronger now that he finally had someone he could vent to.

Maybe things would be okay after all.

Chapter End Notes

hope you enjoyed!! i love you all so much, and i hope you have a good weekend!

Chapter Summary

Wilbur's Halloween Party, and the shitstorm that goes along with it.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The one thing George always hated about Wilbur's parties were the stupid *fucking* costume requirements.

Usually, he'd dress as something basic such as a vampire or a cop, occasionally going so far as to dress up like a character from a movie. Never in a million years did George imagine he'd be attending one dressed as a fucking Disney princess. It wasn't even sexy looking, either. It was a genuine, full-length princess dress that hung off his shoulders like a cape and brushed against the floor whenever he moved.

The colour was hideous, too. A trashy, neon pink that somehow managed to make him look even *paler* under the bright bathroom lights in Quackity's bathroom. George was manly enough, however, to admit that the off-the-shoulder neckline of the dress actually really suited him. The thin sleeves were a much softer pink, almost translucent in the way they travelled down his slender arms, and were one of the things about the costume that didn't make him want to throw up.

The outfit came with matching stockings and clunky, tiny heels in a similar shade of hot pink- but George refused to even so much as *look* at them. He'd binned them the moment he got home from the costume store, eventually deciding to wear his regular white Air Force 1's underneath instead. The dress was more than enough embarrassment for one night.

George sighed as he picked up his flimsy, plastic tiara, debating on whether or not to put it on at all. He was already wearing his usual tinted sunglasses, and whilst he definitely wouldn't consider himself a fashionista, he didn't want to accidentally over accessorise. George decided on letting Quackity have the final say, keeping the item in a tight grip as he made his way out of the bathroom.

Quackity was too busy doing his own face paint to notice George reentering his bedroom, using an old brush to messily draw an exaggerated red smiley face onto himself. George cleared his throat after two minutes of waiting, carefully keeping his eyes averted onto the ceiling when he heard the paintbrush fall back onto the dresser.

"Holy shit," Quackity abruptly snorted, his eyes wide in a mix of disbelief and amusement, "I can't believe you actually did it."

"Shut up," George snapped, his cheeks and ears flushing a bright red in embarrassment. He turned around so that his back was visible, gesturing to the zipper resting just above his ass, "Can you *please* just make yourself useful and zip this up for me?"

Quackity quickly did as he was told, laughing unabashedly as he zipped George's dress for him. It got stuck a few times, the cheap material struggling to close together in a way that quickly made

George frustrated. He just wanted it to be over with. Once done, his eyes caught on the glinting gold trapped within George's fingers, a smug smirk promptly rising to his face as he realised what it was.

"Is that Princess George's royal tiara?" Quackity hummed knowingly, watching with a cat-like grin as the flush on the back of George's neck grew darker, "You should put it on."

"I actually hate you," George seethed through gritted teeth, hoping that the less of a reaction he gave, the quicker the teasing would be done with. With shaking hands, he placed the tiara onto his head, screwing his eyes shut as he turned back around in Quackity's direction, "Happy now?"

"Extremely." Was Quackity's simple reply, the grin never leaving his face as he made his way back over to the dresser to finish getting ready.

George huffed at his friend's retreating figure, shuffling over to his unmade bed to flop down onto it. The dress was itching at his skin in some places, and made him shiver in others whenever the cool fabric shifted against him. It was safe to say that he never wanted to wear something like this again. Deep down, though, he knew he'd think back on this as a funny memory when he was older.

He watched in barely concealed disinterest as Quackity finished up, doing one last swipe of smudged black paint under his eyes before turning to George with a proud grin. George couldn't help but smile fondly at just how excited his friend seemed, and the sentiment almost managed to make him forget his own pained misery. *Almost.*

"I don't want to go anymore," George groaned childishly once he noticed Quackity bending down to put on his shoes. That meant it was almost time to leave. He turned over onto his stomach, burying his face into the blanket messily strewn across the bed, "I'm going to get bullied, Q."

"Character development," Quackity snorted again as he stood back up, "God knows you need it."

George elected to ignore him, only reacting enough to reach behind himself and stick up one of his middle fingers. Quackity only laughed louder at the action, and George felt more so than saw as Quackity dropped down onto the bed next to him, the mattress dipping slightly under the added weight. Things had been better between them recently, what with George essentially clinging on to him since he'd started avoiding Dream.

"Listen," Quackity sighed when George still wouldn't budge, "Of course there's gonna be some assholes there, they're *everywhere* for fuck's sake- but they don't matter, okay? You look hot as shit, man, fucking *own* it."

"Yeah?" George mumbled after a few moments, the blanket muffling his voice.

"I know that your *stupid* brain is probably doing its usual overthinking shit right now," Quackity murmured back, sounding sincere as his hand reached over to pat in between his shoulder blades, "But you've looked seriously stressed lately, dude. Use this as an opportunity to let go a little, alright?"

It would be so easy to say no, to stay curled up in Quackity's warm bed whilst the other went out and partied by himself- but something was holding him back. George hadn't realised just how much his own stress and anxieties had impacted his friend, and now knew that Quackity's desire to see him let loose was to help himself relax slightly as well.

"Fine," George eventually grumbled, unable to ignore the genuine concern in the younger's voice. He slowly pushed himself back up into a sitting position, fixing his tiara before turning to Quackity

again with a defeated sigh, "Let's get going already. Wil will have our heads if we're late again."

Quackity made a whooping noise in excitement back, and that's when George knew he'd made the right decision.

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Wilbur's parties, to put it lightly, were *insane*.

The Soot family were one of the richest in their town, rivalling Dream's own in terms of wealth. His father, Phil, worked as the principal of the private school Wilbur and Co. attended- and so it was safe to assume that they were all doing extremely well for themselves. They'd inherited a lot of old generational money when his mother passed, too, which only helped to add to their already overflowing sums of cash.

Unlike Dream's fairly modernistic house, having had multiple things done to it to make it appear that way, Wilbur's was very old-timey and untouched. He lived in a mansion on the opposite end of town, one that was filled with grand hallways and curved staircases, the only modern features being the private gate and swimming pool they'd had installed.

Due to the massive size of the house, and the fact that it was located virtually in the middle of nowhere, Wilbur could afford to make his parties as crazy as he wanted. George only really attended his Halloween ones, but Wilbur threw an event for almost every national holiday. The others were smaller, though, and reserved mostly for only close friends and family.

The gate was already open when Quackity pulled up at their driveway, and George didn't even need to lower his window to hear the thumping bass coming from inside the house. God, it might even be loud enough to draw the cop's attention this time. A giddy smile rose to his face at the sound despite the looming anxiety in his stomach, knowing that he'd have at least a *semblance* of a good time. It was impossible not to.

The driveway outside the entrance was already packed with a variation of vehicles, and Quackity had to drive around for several minutes just to find a parking spot. He eventually found one quite hidden away, something that George both hated and liked. Hated because it meant a longer walking distance to the house, and liked because it meant the car would be protected from any pranks.

The entrance was decorated with fake cobwebs and carved out pumpkins, a mass of them huddled right next to the door. It was very obvious to George that they were done by Wilbur's family themselves, the initials underneath each carving being a dead giveaway. It was cute, though, a homey touch compared to what George could only assume was an absolute shit-show inside.

Entering the house was always the best part, as George finally got to see what the theme his friend had gone with for this year was. Surprisingly, Wilbur hadn't gone with any this year, instead decorating his house in regular house party material. LED's and black lights were strewn all over the place, stuck to various walls and stairways in an organised way. EDM music was being blasted all around the house too at almost deafening levels as though they were in some kind of club.

George couldn't help but think that it was cool regardless.

Loud cheering was coming from the room where the music seemed to be coming from, and the two boys quickly made their way in to see what was going on. There seemed to be some kind of dance battle going on, an excited crowd having formed around the participants as the music grew louder. George physically recoiled at the overwhelming amount of scents present, and shuffled further

away from the group. Quackity weaved through the mess of people with ease, abandoning George to go and find the drinks.

Whilst George definitely wouldn't consider himself a 'party person', he could definitely appreciate something as well-planned as Wilbur's own.

Thankfully, Wilbur always kept the drinks, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic, readily available in his dining room. It was partly due to the fact that there was an already well-stocked bar in there, but also because it was one of the first rooms you saw when entering the house. Just as George reached out to grab the nearest opened bottle of Vodka, his phone buzzed noisily in the makeshift pocket he'd made in his dress.

He accidentally snorted out loud at the message he'd received.

Karl had sent him a blurry Snapchat picture, one that showed only a dark background and a flashed image of his eyebrows. George knew Wilbur's house well enough to recognise it as the living room, and quickly put back down the bottle of Vodka to grab a beer instead. He already knew that this was going to be a long night.

With a new cold beer in hand, George made his way to go find his friend.

x-x-x-x-x

"George!" Karl yelled over the mass of people he was dancing within, reaching one of his long arms into the air to wave him over.

Somehow, the music was even *worse* in the living room, the noise reverberating in George's ears so loudly that it almost hurt. The room was almost pitch black, too, a few strings of LED's being the only source of light for what felt like miles. The scents were worse too, the room smelling predominantly Alpha-like (much to George's disgruntlement). Still, he pushed through the crowd to reach Karl, his face breaking out into a blinding grin when he finally reached him.

"Karl!" George greeted, his smile only growing when the taller man tugged him into a sweaty hug. He nuzzled against the skin on Karl's neck, his body instantly relaxing at the safe feeling he got whenever Karl touched him. George sighed in content before speaking again, "How long have you been here?"

"Uh, like... an hour?" Karl answered loudly, his voice having to strain to be heard over the music, "You'll have to ask Sap, I'm too buzzed to think properly right now."

George hummed in reply, pulling away from the embrace when he started feeling too hot. Karl tracked the motion with his glassy eyes, releasing a giggle of surprise when he finally managed to see what George's outfit was. The princess dress was clinging to his body now, the clammy skin he'd accumulated whilst pushing past the crowds of people holding the fabric firmly against his skin.

"Oh my God," Karl wheezed, one of his hands rising to cover his mouth as though trying to muffle his laughter, "I thought Q was joking when he said you were coming dressed like that."

"*Clearly*, he wasn't." George scoffed, his own hands self-consciously raising to fix the tiara on his head, "What are you meant to be, anyway?"

Karl was dressed in some kind of character-themed outfit, looking like a scientist with a pair of fancy goggles resting atop his head. A pocket watch was hanging out from the breast pocket of the bright coat he was wearing, it's ticking so loud that George could almost hear it over the illegible

music coming from the DJ stand.

"A time traveller," Karl answered, one of his eyebrows raising incredulously as though he struggled to see how George couldn't figure it out, "Obviously."

"...Right." George slowly replied. He started subconsciously swaying along to the music, giggling when Karl moved to match him. They semi-danced in comfortable silence for several minutes, enjoying each others company as the music changed into something bearable to listen to. It was nice, George thought, to hang out with someone like this.

He let out a groan of annoyance once he realised he'd already finished his beer, throwing it carelessly into the corner of the room. A pleasant buzz was travelling through his veins, not enough to make him drunk- but enough to leave him feeling borderline tipsy. It numbed his brain, cutting off any and all anxious thoughts, and George quickly came to appreciate it.

Suddenly, Sapnap was walking back over to them, a bright red drinking cup in his hand and a similar shade of flush on his face to match. It was clear that he'd been drinking for a while, the youngest's eyes completely blown out with how drunk he was. He lightened up when he spotted George, quickly moving over to wrap an arm around his shoulders.

"Gogy, you made it!" Sapnap cheered through drunken hiccups, nuzzling his and George's cheeks together sloppily, "You look *great*, dude."

"Hey, Sappitus," George chuckled, his voice coming out strange from how Sapnap was squishing his cheek. He wiggled out of the one-armed hug, watching fondly as the other man simply shuffled over to slump on Karl instead, "You look pretty good yourself."

What he said was true enough. Sapnap was dressed as a knight, the outfit making a loud clunking noise whenever he moved. It was endearing though, especially when it repeated the sound particularly loud when Sapnap leant over to kiss Karl's cheek. Karl melted into the touch, humming to himself as he lifted a hand to fiddle with his lover's damp hair.

George was suddenly feeling *very* much like a third wheel.

"I'm gonna go grab some food," George cleared his throat to gain their attention, "Either of you want anything?"

When they eventually both shook their heads in reply, George sauntered off in the direction of the kitchen. Colourful costumes flashed in his peripheral as he swiftly darted through the randomly placed groups of people, and he was suddenly thankful that he was such a lightweight. The small amount of alcohol he'd had numbed him to stranger's stares, and protected him from freaking out about the potential judgement he'd see in their eyes.

It took him several minutes to reach the kitchen, which was thankfully empty for the most part. Most people were scattered around the main rooms of the house or outside by the pool, meaning that George could have a quiet five minutes to himself. He rifled through Wilbur's cupboard, smirking to himself when he found a tub of sweets.

George was a notorious sweet tooth- but *especially* when it came to candy.

He loved anything that could be remotely considered a candy, able to stomach bucket loads of them without feeling sick. His favourites, though, were anything cherry flavoured. It's always been a thing for him, the taste of the sweet fruits. Wilbur always kept a stash of gummies hidden somewhere in his kitchen, and because of George's almost addiction, he could sniff them out with

ease.

George jumped up onto the counter, resting the tub down next to him as he leant his head back against the wooden cupboard. It felt nice and cool on his hot skin, the exertion from running around all night having made him all sticky and feverish. Without even looking, George picked out several cherry gummies, putting them in a neat pile on his lap before nibbling on one of them.

He ate in silence for a few minutes, refuelling his energy and his hunger by shovelling mouthfuls of candy into his mouth. He barely even noticed when someone else entered the room, too caught up in relaxing to hear or see them.

"George?" Bad called, sounding a mix of concerned and excited to see him.

George's eyes sprung open in surprise, the candy falling from his mouth almost comically as his head whipped round to stare at his friend. He honestly wasn't expecting Bad to show up, not after he'd explained that he hadn't received an invite in years. George imagined that Quackity probably gave him his plus one invitation.

"Hey," George slowly greeted, raising the hand not full of sweets to wave at him, "I didn't know you'd be here."

"Quackity invited me last minute," Bad hummed his answer. His eyes darted to George's hands, to his costume before landing back on George's face, "How much have you had to drink?"

"Just a beer," George shrugged, his eyes widening as it suddenly clicked what Bad was eluding to, "Oh, my outfit? Blame Big Q."

Bad nodded in reply, moving forward to grab a water bottle from the pile next to the fridge. He paused, thinking something through before eventually deciding to pick up two. He wordlessly handed one to George, watching fondly as he guzzled it down almost immediately. George hadn't realised he was that thirsty. Bad chuckled when George finished it in record time, taking the empty bottle from him to place it in the bin.

Once done, he moved back to standing in front of George, eyeing the sweets on his lap in curiosity, "What're you eating?"

"Cherry gummies," George hummed, smiling as he popped a few more of them into his mouth. He quickly swallowed them down, picking out another few before lifting his head to face Bad again, "Want some?"

"I'm okay, thank you." Bad shook his head as he chuckled. He passed George another water bottle, gently patting him on the knee before making his way out the kitchen again, "Look after yourself, okay? But also have fun."

"Yes, Bad," George answered dutifully, waving his friend off with a fond smile, "You too."

Bad was such a good friend to him.

George ate a few more sweets before finally getting bored, not bother to put away the tub as he slunk back into the dance party room. He couldn't spot Quackity anywhere, the shorter man seemingly having gotten lost in the absolute chaos surrounding him. The dance battle from earlier had ended, too, and instead left varying groups of couples grinding on one another and friends jumping around messily everywhere.

Suddenly, George was forcefully pushed into someone, making him bump against their back before

flinging him backwards. His eyes screwed shut as he braced for impact, a shocked whimper falling from his lips as he felt himself nearing the ground. An arm quickly caught him, however, winding supportively around his waist to keep him from falling any further. George opened his eyes again in surprise as the danger disappeared, his head tilting back to meet his saviour's face.

Weirdly enough, it was none other than Wilbur Soot himself.

"Woah, easy," Wilbur soothed, having not yet noticed who exactly it was that he saved. When he finally looked down at George's face, a somewhat cocky grin broke out on his face, "Well if it isn't *the* great George himself. You okay, man?"

"Wilbur," George sighed in relief, a grateful smile overtaking his expression as he shakily stood up properly again, "Nice catch."

"Normally you *thank* the guy who saved your life," Wilbur's grin grew, letting go of George's waist to put his hands in his pocket. He tilted his head to the side as he watched George calm himself, and the shorter man was instantly flooded with his gunpowder scent.

"Thank you, *Wilbur*," George rolled his eyes as he huffed out a laugh, "Seriously though, thanks. That could've been pretty nasty if I actually fell."

"Don't mention it," Wilbur waved him off. He froze when he noticed George's costume, his mouth twitching with the urge to let out a laugh that George knew would be obnoxiously loud, "So... you came as a princess?"

"Would you believe me if I said it was a dare?" George smiled sheepishly, his face turning a light pink as his embarrassment came back tenfold. His close friends seeing him like this was bad enough- but *Wilbur*? Just kill him now. It seemed no matter how much alcohol he had, this costume was doomed to eternally mortify him. At Wilbur's quick head shake of disagreement, George sighed, "Quackity made me."

"Now *that* I can believe," Wilbur chuckled, causing George to laugh along with him, "It suits you."

"You think?" George snorted, knowing that the taller man was just playing around. Still, he was unable to stop the flush on his face burning brighter at the compliment- even if it was a joke. He grabbed the top of the skirt part, lifting it to curtsy clumsily, "How kind of you, Mr Soot."

That made Wilbur chuckle again, which brought a big grin to George's face. He loved making his friends happy, but hearing them laugh was another kind of joy. He didn't really consider himself a funny person, so to have someone react so positively to one of his jokes made him feel all warm inside. They chatted for a few minutes, the blush staying on George's face as more people started to gather around them, feeling their stares burn holes through his dress.

Someone shoved into him again, this time making him bump against Wilbur's chest. The taller man helped him upright again with a snort, uncaring of how precarious their position looked as he gently grabbed one of George's wrists. Just as George opened his mouth to apologise, maybe even thank Wilbur *again*, an even larger hand was wrapping around his previously untouched wrist.

"George," Dream's voice grumbled from behind him, causing George to spin around in shock. His face paled at the absolutely *pissed* expression his friend had, his red eyes gleaming enough to make him subconsciously take a step back. The feeling of Wilbur's cold hand disappeared from his other wrist as Wilbur walked off, seemingly knowing well enough to leave George and Dream to sort out their own shit.

"Dream?" George blinked, his voice coming out slightly shakey in surprise.

Dream didn't respond with anything other than a low growl, his hand tightening its grip as he tugged George out of the room. George knew better than to complain, letting Dream lead him through the winding hallways and corridors with seemingly practised ease. It made George wonder just how close Dream was to Wilbur's family- but knew better than to ask when Dream was so obviously mad.

Dream's incessant tugging eventually stopped as he pulled him inside what appeared to be an office, slamming the door shut behind him so forcefully that George feared it might just come off the hinges altogether. Dream let go of George's wrist, stalking forwards as George slowly moved backwards in return. A slight part of him felt thrills at just how predatory Dream was acting, but the majority was just nervous.

Dream looked completely different too, his costume aside. His normally bright, green eyes seemed hazy and tinted red- something that clearly showed where his head was at. He *reeked* of alcohol as well, and George wouldn't be surprised if the taller man had just raised Wilbur's bar. His demeanour was completely off, his normally welcoming, friendly energy having been replaced with something messy and angry.

George didn't have to be an expert on Alphas to be able to recognise that his friend was very much lost within that headspace.

George continued moving back until his back bumped against the desk placed in the middle of the room, his hands grabbing the edges of it desperately as Dream advanced still, slowly coming closer and closer. Dream only stopped when he saw how hard George was gripping the desk, his feet finally pausing less than a couple of feet away.

"Do you *enjoy* fucking with me, George?" Dream seethed, the coldness in his voice instantly making George recoil into himself, "Messing with my *feelings*?"

"W-What?" George stammered as confused, faux innocence laced his tone. Truthfully, he *did* know what Dream was referring to, but he refused to admit it. He didn't want to be the one to blame for their friendship being in tatters, didn't want to acknowledge that he'd fucked up so badly, "What're you on about?"

Dream took another step forward, and George in turn lifted himself up onto the desk. Dream's eyes narrowed as they watched the action, his hands clenching into fists at his sides as he fought back the urge to move closer. George knew that Dream wasn't entirely himself right now, but he was aware enough to recognise that what the younger man was saying was true enough.

"We almost kissed," Dream said matter-of-factly, sounding more and more irritated with each word falling out of his mouth, "You run away and avoid me for *weeks* on end," He continued, taking another step forward, "And now here you are, pressing yourself up against Wilbur *fucking* Soot."

"Seriously?" George scoffed, feeling himself start to become annoyed, "That's what this's about? Wilbur was saving me from falling over, dickhead. He's my *friend*."

"Yeah? I was *just* your friend until our little *incident*, George," Dream spat, "Who's to say you haven't done the same thing with him?"

George bristled at that, his hackles instantly rising at what Dream was implying. How fucking *dare* he? Dream was *genuinely* out here making assumptions, to his *face*, that he went around acting that way with just about anyone and everyone. Fuck, he might as well have just called George a fucking

slut. George lurched forward, his fingers curling in the top half of Dream's costume.

He was dressed as a prisoner, a long orange jumpsuit hugging his body perfectly. If George wasn't so pissed, he *definitely* would've appreciated the outfit more. But as it stood, all he could feel was blinding rage. He tugged Dream closer, baring his teeth at the taller as Dream's face lowered to mere inches away from his own. George could feel Dream's hot breath puff against his lips, and an involuntary spark of desire shooting down his spine.

"Listen up, asshole," George hissed, tugging at the orange jumpsuit once more, "I don't care *what* you think- but I do *not* go around nearly kissing every guy I meet. What happened with you was an isolated incident, a one-off, a fucking *accident*, okay?"

"An accident, George?" Dream repeated, his voice dropping into a low, deep tone- and that's when George realised he fucked up. Dream barked out a laugh, the sound coming out cruel and full of disbelief, "A *goddamn* accident."

"What's so funny?" George huffed, trying to ignore the way Dream's gravelly voice was sending shivers down his body.

"I've *seen* the way you look at me," Dream raised an eyebrow up at him cockily as a playful, knowing smirk overtook the previous sneer on his lips, "D'you think I'm blind? Think I don't see the way you almost *drool* all over yourself whenever I so much as touch you?"

"What?" George's jaw dropped in shock, his eyes widening behind his glasses, "Where's all of this coming from? I don't-"

"You called it an accident-" Dream's smirk grew when George clocked in on what 'it' exactly was, "When I know for a *fact* that you wanted me to kiss you. You tried to pull me closer at one point, remember?"

Unfortunately, George *did* remember. Images of his hands sliding through Dream's soft hair and down his neck came to mind, as well as more brief thoughts of him actually tugging the taller man closer. With it came memories of Dream's lips ghosting over his own, his eyes flashing that beautiful red of theirs as he slid in between George's legs.

"See, baby?" Dream cooed, the mocking tone behind his words not registering in George's ears. He'd zoned out as he remembered the incident, his grip on Dream's costume getting looser as his mind turned foggy and his eyes became glassier. The pet name was getting to him, too, causing another shiver to wrack his body. Fuck, even when Dream was being a dick- he *still* wanted him.

Dream made a falsely sympathetic noise in the back of his throat, pausing at George's barely stifled gasp to take in the dark flush to his cheeks and neck. He chuckled deep in his throat at the reaction, his hand moving once more to rest gently on George's jaw. His thumb stretched up, applying light pressure as it slowly swiped over his bottom lip. "I didn't even have to do anything, and you've gone all soft and sweet for me."

"Dream..." George breathed airily, his eyes slowly flickering gold behind his glasses. He leant into the touch to his lip, subconsciously parting his mouth slightly to give Dream more room as the taller man stared down at him with an unreadable expression.

"Then tell me you don't want this," Dream murmured, his voice coming out as a low hum. His hand dropped from George's mouth, instead using the tip of his pointer finger to tilt George's chin up, forcing him to finally look up at him, "That you don't want *me*. "

George opened and closed his mouth a few times, staring up at Dream hopelessly as he tried to figure out what to say. This was what Sapnap was warning him about before when he told him he needed to choose- to make a *decision* on whether or not to accept Dream's feelings. His mind was a mess, though, conflicting between running away or inclining closer, "Dream, you know I-"

"Can I kiss you, Georgie?" Dream interrupted lowly, his fingers gently stroking down the sharp edge of George's jaw before pausing to cup his cheek, "Will you let me?"

"...We can't," George whispered back, unable to stop himself from leaning into the soft touch.

"You sure about that, pretty boy?" Dream scoffed in disbelief, shooting George a cocky, lopsided smirk that had him *melting*, "You don't sound very convinced of yourself."

George's eyes fall down to stare at Dream's lips, who licks them in response to the heated look. He started breathing a little shakily as he made up his mind, his hands ever so slowly raising from Dream's jumpsuit to sift through his hair, finally tangling in the golden strands with a loose grip. Dream started opening his mouth to say something, his eyes wide in disbelief at George's forwardness when George tugs him down to crash their lips together messily.

It's everything a first kiss probably shouldn't be- but it's entirely them, and that makes it perfect.

It was messy with inexperience at first, their teeth clashing together at the force of which George had yanked Dream down, but they soon settled into a steady rhythm. Dream's hands fall to grip at George's hips, frantically tugging the shorter boy closer until he's basically forced to arch against him. George only pressed against him more readily, desperate to keep their mouths locked together.

Dream's grip promptly turned tight, his fingers digging into the soft flesh beneath through his dress as though scared George was going run away again. George was quick to reassure him, his legs wrapping around Dream's waist in an attempt to keep him close. It worked, Dream's grip loosening again as George's fingers soothingly ran through his hair.

George moved his lips against Dream's needily, sucking and nibbling on his bottom lip in a way that probably should've been painful. Dream found it hotter than anything, stifling a groan at the little sparks of pleasure the pain from George's messy actions gave him. George lets Dream relinquish control again after a while, happy to give in to the taller man as Dream's sharp teeth tugged in warning on his own lip.

George parted his mouth once he felt Dream's tongue prodding at his lips, a needy urge to take the kiss even further overtaking the both of them when light pecks became not enough. Dream licked languidly into his mouth, the tip of his tongue brushing against anything and everything, and George knew he was tasting those damned cherry gummies from before.

Dream hummed at the taste, something that made George's Omega preen in pride. Dream's own mouth was still burning with leftover alcohol, almost tasting bitter to George's sensitive tongue. George was slowly growing more and more confident, his nimble fingers tugging at Dream's hair to tempt him closer. The muffled groan Dream let out the tug was enough to fuel George's ego for *days*, and he eagerly repeated the action in an attempt to pull more noises like that out of him.

"Dream," George whimpered when Dream pulled away, not even giving him any time to react before diving back in to bite his bottom lip. George moaned quietly at the bite, tugging Dream back in for another kiss as sparks of electricity danced through his veins, making goosebumps rise on the surface of his skin. Fuck, he'd never felt like this before.

It was like every nerve in his body was on fire, sparking anytime Dream shifted against him or made a little movement with his lips. He'd never felt so sensitive before, either. The skin below his dress was itching to be touched, wanting nothing more than to feel Dream's large, warm hands smoothing over him. His mind was just full of Dream too. Dream's lips, his eyes, his hands. Dream, Dream, Dream-

Dream abruptly pulled away from the kiss, almost moaning right then and there when a trail of spit followed suit. George stared up at him with dazed eyes, not that Dream could see, and tried to tug him back down into another. Dream only pulled further away, shaking his head with a soft chuckle that made George whimper in confusion.

"Do you have an answer for me now, Georgie?" Dream hummed, one of his hands lifting to softly stroke down George's cheek soothingly before lowering again to wipe away the saliva smeared over George's lips, "Did that change your mind at all?"

George only made another confused sounding noise in the back of his throat, his eyebrows furrowing from their place above his glasses. He knew what Dream was asking him, but through the fog in his brain, it was hard to answer. His hand dropped from Dream's hair to tug at his jumpsuit again, hating the distance between them more than anything.

"Is that a no?" Dream let himself be tugged forward, his head purposefully missing George's lips to press against his ear instead. When George didn't respond again, he pressed a sweet kiss to his tragus before pulling away again, making a clicking noise with his tongue as though he was annoyed, "What a shame. I suggest you figure it out soon, Georgie."

George startled in alarm, suddenly snapping out of his cosy headspace when he recognised Dream pulling away for *good*. He didn't want this to be over, not yet- not when they were finally making progress.

His hand lifted from George's waist to stroke up through the back of his hair, scratching his scalp in a way that had George almost *purring*. He moved it again to adjust the tiara that had slipped down slightly on his head, chuckling a deep, "Careful, princess." That sent flickers of fire to burn George's abdomen in the most pleasurable of ways.

"You know where to find me when you've made your mind up, yeah?" Dream smiled, his emotions unreadable through his red eyes. George shuddered in want when Dream pressed a final kiss to his forehead, this one much more tender than any of the others, before turning on his heel and exiting the small office, "Cya, pretty boy."

George could only weakly murmur his own goodbyes, staring in disbelief as Dream sauntered cockily out the room. He was a *mess*, his dress all rumpled for the rough grabbing and his lips feeling absolutely bitten raw. It was a good pain, though, the kind that had George flicking his tongue over the bite marks left behind just to feel the little stings of pleasure they gave him.

God, he was so *fucking* screwed.

Chapter End Notes

ahhh this was so much fun to write, i 'm genuinely kinda proud of it haha. i really hope you enjoyed it! <3

(thank you mj for helping me out so much!! ilysm <3 /p)

just wanted to quickly clarify before it's taken out of context! wilbur and george are PURELY friends-and absolutely no shipping will be going on between them. i'm not viewing their relationship as romantic at all. dream, however, got jealous during their interaction because he's a possessive little shit XD he was madder that it was ANYONE other than him touching george, rather than it being wilbur specifically. i hope this cleared things up!! <3

ALSO: dream is INTENTIONALLY ooc this chapter!! he's had a shit ton to drink and is stuck halfway into his alpha state. in short, he's not being a dick to george on purpose, and will be back to his normal self next chapter. feel free to message me on twitter if you need to know more! it'll be explained more in the next chapter, and his actions will of course have consequences :] thank you

Chapter Summary

The aftermath of the party, George makes a few decisions, and he and Dream have an important discussion.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Despite whatever had happened with Dream, George still managed to enjoy the rest of the party.

Following Dream's disappearance, he'd spent half an hour lying sprawled across Phil's *very* expensive-looking desk in an attempt to catch his breath. It was like the moment Dream had actually left, he'd taken all the air in the room with him. George could still feel the tension from before too, could still feel Dream's slightly chapped lips pressed heatedly against his own.

That feeling didn't really leave him for the remainder of the party.

Eventually, George had regathered enough energy to go hunt down Quackity, pushing aside the leftover fog in his head to focus on his best friend. Quackity was drunk as *fuck*, alongside Karl and Sapnap, who had met up with the shorter man sometime during George's escapade with Dream. George very quickly felt the urge to join them in getting shit-faced, leaving poor Bad to look after them for the rest of the night.

From there, he really only had very brief memories of the rest of the party. He could remember taking part in some karaoke with his group- something that sober him would've *never* done, and could faintly remember being kicked off the machine only minutes later by someone with pink hair. George could also recollect eating another mountain of cherry gummies, this time with Sapnap, before getting caught by Bad who quickly confiscated them.

At some point, someone had taken over the DJ booth and blasted some semi-decent music, which had promptly started a rave in the middle of Wilbur's living room. Unsurprisingly, the cops were called moments later and they were all forced to scatter, George having to hold up his princess dress as he ran for his *life* towards Bad's car.

He could only use the blurry pictures from his camera roll as proof of whatever happened after that, and even they weren't really good enough to piece together a solid idea.

Bad had driven them all back to Quackity's, driving so fast that George almost threw up all over his nice leather seats right then and there. He'd thought up until then that Bad would actually be the safest driver out of all of them, but apparently not. George had to help Quackity carry an unconscious Sapnap into the house, as the youngest had somehow managed to sleep through the cop car sirens.

Luckily, Quackity's parents didn't really care about him having unplanned guests over. George was round theirs more often and not, and knew of the other three boys briefly as well. They were already asleep when they'd gotten home, something that Quackity was immensely relieved by. He didn't really feel like explaining the intoxicated states he and all his underage friends were in.

He'd dumped him unceremoniously onto Quackity's guest bed, Karl quickly making himself comfortable next to him. Bad had elected to sleep on the couch downstairs, leaving George to share a bed with Quackity himself. Thankfully, it wasn't anything unusual, the two having had numerous sleepovers in this exact position before. Neither of them were sleep-cuddlers either (as far as they knew), which helped saved them from any awkward conversations the next morning too.

George had checked his phone before falling asleep, his thumb hovering over Dream's contact warily before deciding against it and dropping his phone messily onto the bedside table next to him. It could be discussed another day- *hopefully* when he didn't have several bottles worth of alcohol in his system.

X-X-X-X-X

George had never felt so weirdly emotional about attending school before.

He was feeling a mixture of giddiness and nerves at the thought of seeing Dream again, having not spoken at all since the actual night of the party. Whilst technically he hadn't outright stopped avoiding Dream yet, it still felt strange that the taller boy hadn't messaged him at all over the weekend. You'd think that after making out with him, Dream would come to the assumption that they were on talking terms again- but clearly not.

George liked to pretend that the ignorance didn't hurt, especially after he'd been doing the same thing to Dream literal days prior, but it was hard to ignore the constant whining his inner Omega was doing. It was inevitable, though, that side of him being way more sensitive than it should be thanks to the awakening it had been going through. It took every little action or thing Dream said as either acceptance or rejection, and it was messing with his head.

Some of the words Dream had said that night still stung, too. He could tell from the alcohol he'd tasted on Dream's tongue that the younger boy wasn't exactly sober, but it didn't make the things he'd said any more excusable. George was particularly upset by the fact that he'd just been ditched afterward as though he was nothing- though, even that could be justified a little.

In the end, they were both just as bad as each other.

Dream was rightfully angry by what George had been doing to him, and George had begrudgingly learned to accept that. As much as he disliked admitting to being wrong, he was determined to end the cycle of angst he kept bringing upon himself and Dream- and that meant taking the blame when it was due. He could only hope that Dream had a similar mindset and wanted to fix things properly too.

George hadn't even meant to avoid Dream in the first place... or at least for as long as he had.

Their current situation was toxic and unnecessarily complicated, something that could've been easily resolved from the start if they weren't both so emotional. That was the problem though, wasn't it? They were only teenagers, and teenagers shouldn't have to be dealing with dangerous secrets and unhealthy relationships. Their immaturity was to be expected.

Everything was so new and so *scary* for George. He'd never felt an attraction to someone before, much less someone who was both an Alpha *and* another boy. George didn't have his parents around to talk to about that kind of thing, and the only other person who knew of his Omega status was Karl- who had enough stuff of his own to deal with.

Essentially, George was alone with his secrets, and that's what made him hesitant to get closer to anyone. He finally had a group of friends, people that he loved unconditionally and felt safe with.

If he lost them thanks to his overwhelming barrage of mysteries, he'd lose everything. George knew that his friends weren't sexist, as evident by their love of Karl, but they might resent him for keeping his gender secret from them- and that terrified him.

He'd rather be sure that he could keep Dream as his friend whilst maintaining his secrecy than become more and risk *everything*.

George knew that on the off chance that they *did* get together, that his Omega side would just completely take over. He almost lost himself to that state several times just from Dream giving him minuscule amounts of affection, so the expectations of physical touch that came with a relationship would be impossible for George to live up to.

Their kiss hadn't changed the fact that he was still an Omega, and that his secret was still *very* much at risk of being exposed.

Then again, they'd made out for *several* minutes at Wilbur's party, and George was mostly fine afterward. He did feel himself slipping into his Omega state, but not enough to be genuinely concerning. Maybe if he and Dream kept it at just kissing, he wouldn't be acting too reckless? They could just continue being friends, whilst sharing a little non-platonic affection every now and then. *Surely* that would be fine?

It wasn't that he didn't care about his secret, because he still very much did *not* want people knowing, but he *was* starting to become less and less paranoid over being found out.

He couldn't admit to liking Dream romantically, at least not verbally. That would ultimately just be giving in to his Omega side, and that would make the situation ten times worse. George couldn't start giving Dream expectations, couldn't let him start picturing George as anything other than a friend. Confessing his feelings to Dream would mean that he was letting *another* one of the walls wrapped protectively around his heart crumble- and George couldn't bring himself to become that vulnerable.

George wasn't oblivious to Dream's feelings, however. He could recognize that the younger boy liked him back, and a small part of him feared that the occasional kiss wouldn't be enough for Dream. George didn't want to lead Dream anymore than he already had, so today he would make sure that Dream knew exactly where his head and his heart were at. He wasn't going to run away anymore, wasn't going to fuck things up more than he already had.

George would finally give him the answer he'd demanded to have at the party.

X-X-X-X-X

Having now sorted out his feelings towards his Dream situation, George entered school with a newfound sense of purpose.

He knew that he still needed to talk to the taller boy properly and really clear the air between them, but that could come later. For now, George was more focused on the fact that it would be the first time he'd seen Dream since they kissed. A small part of him wondered whether Dream would still be acting like the smug, arrogant asshole he had been at the party- or if he was back to his usual, kind self.

George didn't know which one he'd prefer.

On one hand, George adored normal Dream. He treated George with a kind of delicacy and care that he'd ever really felt before, and looked at George so fondly that it made his heartache

sometimes. He was so intuitive, too, always seeming to be the first to clock in whenever George was spiraling in his thoughts. He also pushed aside his own wants and desires to make sure George was comfortable, which wasn't necessarily a good thing- but George appreciated it all the same.

On the other, cocky Dream was *hot* when he wasn't being a jealous prick. The kisses they'd shared had felt *electric*, and just thinking about them sent warmth pooling in George's gut. If he pictured it hard enough, George could almost feel Dream's warm breath ghosting over his lips, or his hand gently caressing his cheek.

Ultimately, they *were* the same person, and Dream was perfect to him no matter what 'mood' he was in. George liked him for him, and that included both the good and the bad.

He kept that in mind the entire way to his Comp-Sci class, his confidence only wavering once he was in front of the classroom door. George couldn't avoid Dream forever, didn't even *want* to anymore- but that didn't stop the small glimmers of anxiety from wrapping around his brain. What if Dream hated him now? What if things really couldn't get better between them?

George knew it was stupid to be thinking of his friend that way, especially when he was the reason things had blown up as much as they had. He also knew that Dream wouldn't hate him, not over something like this. The kiss, though, was *Dream's* fault, and so any awkwardness the taller boy felt over that would be entirely his own problem to deal with.

George inhaled sharply, his eyes narrowing in determination as he walked into class.

He shuffled over to his desk slowly, carefully watching Dream as he dropped down onto his chair and pulled out his laptop. Dream didn't even seem to acknowledge his presence, his eyes focused solely on his computer screen as he typed out something on his keyboard. George blinked at him in mild shock, not used to the absolute radio silence he was receiving.

Normally, Dream would be trying his hardest to gain George's attention, begging and pleading in hushed murmurs every few minutes for George to talk to him. Today, however, Dream was deadly quiet, even his breathing sounding ten times quieter than normal. It worried George slightly, causing a small furrow to form in between his eyebrows. Had Dream finally given up on him?

"...Dream?" George more asked than greeted, his voice dripping with uncertainty. He nearly flinched when Dream abruptly spun around to face him, his pretty green eyes wide in disbelief.

"Yeah?" Dream replied slowly, sounding more confused than anything. When George grimaced at him in response, he spoke again, "...D'you need something?"

"No, I guess not," George muttered, turning back around to face his own laptop. Dream continued to stare at him for a few moments before doing the same thing, easily throwing himself back into his work.

Well, *that* was awkward. The tension between them was different than it had been when George was actively avoiding him- and not in a good way. It was more uncomfortable than anything, whereas before it had just been tense and unknowing. They were best friends for fuck's sake, things shouldn't be so *weird* between them.

Dream wasn't acting like his normal self, *nor* was he acting like an asshole, and George was at a complete loss of what to do. He'd been emotionally preparing himself all weekend to be dealing with some kind of drama or blown up situation, not to be completely ignored. Fuck, he'd actually *prefer* to be cussed out by Dream right now, rather than him acting as though George didn't exist.

Every so often George would glance over at him, only to see Dream acting perfectly natural. Well, the natural he'd gotten used to over the last few minutes where they hadn't been talking. George missed their *old* normal, though. He missed the *stupid* coding jokes Dream would make, his overly bright smile, and his squeaky little windshield wiper laugh. Fuck, he just missed *him*.

It didn't help that everything the taller boy did just seemed effortlessly *hot* now, too. Occasionally, Dream's tongue would dart out to wet his lips, and George would quite literally have to stop himself from swooning. Hell, sometimes Dream would do something that probably shouldn't have been considered hot at *all*, and George would still have to force himself not to melt into a lovesick puddle of goo.

That scenario, in particular, was the muttered curses Dream would let out under his breath whenever he typed something wrong. George would sometimes catch him furiously tapping away at his keyboard, eyes narrowed into a frustrated glare as he hissed a "*Fuck*." through gritted teeth, the swears sending an unreasonable amount of lustful shivers down George's spine.

It really wasn't helping the heat that had been pooling in his gut ever since the party. Dream had told him to 'come find him when he'd made his mind up'... but surely the younger boy wouldn't mind kissing again for the hell of it? It must've been good for him too, it *had* to have been. Dream had left Phil's office looking just as flushed as George had felt. He'd only kissed Dream once, but he was already addicted- and somehow that felt more dangerous than anything else.

He was down so, *so* bad.

George accidentally let out a very audible sigh, causing Dream to look over at him in concern. Even when Dream was supposedly pissed with him, he still cared, and that was enough to make George's heart flutter wildly in his chest. He shot Dream a weak smile, the expression almost immediately dropping from his face when Dream's eyes widened again in surprise.

"Sorry," George cleared his throat, his cheeks flushing a light pink in embarrassment, "I, uh, got a little lost in my own thoughts and-"

"Why are you talking to me?" Dream frowned, staring at George with so much hurt and confusion in his eyes that he visibly winced. George frowned back at him, his Omega whining at the prospect of being rejected. The way the younger boy had said it made it sound like he didn't want George speaking to him at *all*. Maybe he was acting that way because George still hadn't given him an answer? Dream *could* intentionally be playing dumb.

Once Dream had caught sight of George's pained expression, he quickly started explaining himself, "I meant why are you talking to me *now*?"

Oh.

"Can we talk about this later?" George murmured, wincing once more when Dream's frown deepened, "Sorry, it's just... I think it's something we need to speak about properly, y'know? No interruptions."

Dream nodded in response, and that was the last time they spoke for the rest of the lesson. George spent the rest of the lesson either observing Dream or planning what he'd say during their talk, his work left completely unfinished. The group document he and Dream had made for their project was left untouched by him, Dream having done nearly everything present on the sheet. George probably should've felt embarrassed by his lack of concentration, but was too overwhelmed by his nerves to really care all that much.

They finished their lesson in silence, not sparing one another a single glance as they packed away their things and headed to their respective next lessons. It still felt too awkward, and George could only hope that it would be resolved over lunch. He shot Dream a quick text when he got to his English class, telling him to wait for him outside his classroom- to which Dream replied with a simple thumbs-up.

He'd sat through his next class feeling as though he had a rock in his stomach, weighing him down with a massive ball of anxiety and guilt. George had never craved Dream's attention so fiercely before- especially when he knew he shouldn't be. He didn't deserve it after treating his friend so horribly.

X-X-X-X-X

As promised, Dream was waiting patiently outside George's classroom for him moments after the bell for lunch had rung.

With a rush of confidence George didn't even know he had, he'd taken Dream's hand, ignoring the wide-eyed expression on the taller boy's face as he all but dragged him down the hallway. They walked in silence, George expertly weaving them through the crowds of students and into the more secluded part of the school building.

He and Quackity had stumbled across an abandoned classroom back when they were freshmen, and made the room their secret hangout place for whenever the cafeteria felt like too much. That's where they'd been eating as of late too, since George had actively been avoiding their usual lunch table. Thankfully, he'd remembered to text Quackity during his lesson and tell him not to show up there today.

George sighed in relief once they reached the room, letting go of Dream's hand to shut the door behind them. A few desks and chairs were scattered around the place, but Dream still elected to stand in the middle of the room. George followed after him, fidgeting nervously as Dream stared down at him with an unreadable expression on his face.

"So?" Dream started, his voice sounding slightly fed-up as he asked, "You gonna explain why you're acting normal with me again or not?"

"Um, well," George stammered, taken aback slightly by the cold tones in Dream's voice *and* in his scent. He took a deep, shaky breath, looking up to stare into Dream's eyes, "You wanted an answer, right? I've finally got one for you."

"George, what the *hell* are you talking about?" Dream frowned as his nose wrinkled in confusion, his head tilting to the side, "An answer to *what*?"

George felt that stone of anxiety from before come back tenfold, weighing him down so much he almost felt like he might collapse onto the floor. He couldn't tell if this was some kind of prank or not, couldn't tell whether Dream was being serious in his confusion or was using it as an avoidance tactic. His hands lifted to curl in the fabric of Dream's hoodie, a wave of hurt crashing over him as he tugged him down so they were the same height.

"At the party," George exhaled shakily, his eyes shutting for a moment if only to block out Dream's puzzled expression, "You told me to make my mind up about you."

"I-I don't..." Dream stuttered, whirling around to face him with desperate eyes, "I don't remember."

"Are you fucking with me right now? Seriously, Dream?" George stared back at him incredulously,

his jaw open slightly in shock. When Dream only shook his head in response, George's voice broke down into a scared whisper, "So what, did you 'forget' the kiss too? "

"...Kiss?" Dream repeated slowly, his body freezing as his eyes somehow managed to grow even wider in alarm. He tugged himself out of George's grip, looking genuinely lost as he gazed down at him in suspicion, "When the fuck did *that* happen? Are you sure you weren't just... I don't know-dreaming, or something? Fuck, I'm flattered but-"

"At Wilbur's party," George spoke slowly, his voice ice-cold and hard with barely contained frustration. Why was Dream still pretending to not remember? He harshly jabbed his finger into Dream's chest, taking a large step forward, "You got all jealous of Wilbur helping me, *dragged* me into his dad's office, and then proceeded to kiss me. Ring any bells, Dream? 'Cause I'm pretty sure I didn't fucking *imagine* going to his party when the others can confirm I was there."

They fell into silence for a few minutes, George's angry puffs of breath the only sound filling the room. Dream was completely frozen, his mind processing George's words at snail speed. George waited patiently for it to finally click, only to frown five minutes later when Dream was *still* staring blankly at the floor. He cleared his throat loudly, almost sighing in relief once that caught Dream's attention.

"So you're talking to me now because I- because *we*-" Dream stammered, his brain exploding with the new information being given to him. He genuinely had no recollection of any of it, no memory of any conversation or fucking *kiss* of all things.

"Jesus, why would I continue ignoring you after that? Are you seriously going to make me beg, Dream? How long are you planning on playing pretend for?" George interrupted him, almost shouting in his frustration.

"I *swear* I'm not," Dream murmured, his voice sounding so sincere it shocked George out of any angry emotions. Dream continued rambling, tugging at his own hair in stress as he desperately tried to think back, "I'm so sorry, George. Fuck, I was drunk as *shit*, man. Techno had challenged me to a shot competition when we were doing pre-drinks, and I was wasted before the party had even started."

"Is that honestly all you remember?" George's eyes grew teary again. Fuck, why did this hurt so much? George should've been able to tell Dream wouldn't have any memory of it when they kissed anyway, the bitter taste of alcohol in Dream's mouth that night having been a clear giveaway to how intoxicated he was, "You don't remember kissing me? Any of it?"

"I don't, I'm sorry. Even the drinking shit's kind of blurry, to be honest," Dream groaned, his hand sliding down from his hair to rub at his temples, a tension headache already forming. When he looked back up at George, his cheeks were flushed a light pink, "I'm, uh, I'm in pre-rut, too. I knew I shouldn't have drunk anything in that state, but I did it anyway and *you* got hurt as a result."

"Pre-rut?" George repeated, ignoring the other things he'd said. His apologies, whilst nice to hear, couldn't take away the current hurt he felt.

"My brain goes all... blank, I guess," Dream answered carefully, "I can't really control what I feel or act, and alcohol and drugs definitely make it worse. I act more on instincts than anything, which is probably why I got so jealous of Wilbur. Normal me would never do that... I think."

George didn't respond, slowly sinking down to the floor as his chest tightened in pain. It felt like rejection, though the rational part of George's brain knew it was anything but. Dream quickly moved to sit down opposite him, keeping a decent distance between them, but still managing to

stare at him with that damned mixture of guilt and concern.

"I know it's not an excuse," Dream frowned guiltily, the sight looking completely wrong on him in George's eyes, "I'm not trying to make it one, either. I shouldn't have kissed you in that state, no matter what I personally was feeling or whatever my Alpha was too. You don't deserve to be treated like that, George, by me *or* by anyone else."

"It was my first kiss, and you don't even remember it." George eventually mumbled, the absolutely horrified expression Dream dawned afterward making his heart squeeze painfully in his chest. He almost regretted saying the words, wanting nothing more than to wish them out of existence- if only to get rid of that look on Dream's face.

"George..." Dream whispered, his hand twitching from where it was resting on his knee as though he wanted to reach out and touch him, "I'm so, *so* sorry."

"It's fine," George smiled at him shakily, "Wasn't your fault, remember?"

"But it-" Dream argued, only cutting himself off when George started shaking his head. Neither of them wanted to start an argument about the rights and wrongs of the situation, not in their current states. He sighed, a determined look filling his eyes as he stared directly into the lenses of George's glasses, "Let me make it up to you, okay?"

"How?" George blinked in surprise. At Dream's silence, he slowly processed what the other was asking. When it finally clicked, he gasped, hoping he didn't sound *too* excited at the prospect, "... You want to kiss me again? Seriously?"

"More than anything... if you'd like to," Dream chuckled weakly, his nails digging into his ripped jeans in an effort to force his Alpha back, "I'm pissed that it wasn't really *me* that got to do it in the first place."

George debated the offer in his head for a moment, his gaze flitting between Dream's clenched hands, his slightly flustered expression, and the genuine guilt present in his olive-green eyes. It was unfair, how weak Dream made him. With a slow nod, George leaned forward enough to feel Dream's warm breath blowing against his face, his mouth pursed as he readied himself to kiss him-

Only to be stopped by one of Dream's long fingers pressing against his lips.

"*After* my rut," Dream hummed, one side of his mouth twitching upwards into a half-smile as his finger slid from George's lips to gently trail down his jaw, "I don't want it to influence... *this* in any way, and you deserve better than to have your first *proper* kiss in some shitty old classroom."

"Really?" George whispered, his breath stuttering slightly when Dream's hand shifted upwards to sweetly stroke his cheek.

"Really," Dream firmly repeated, his voice coming out just as quiet. He watched George sharply for any signs of discomfort before carrying on, "I'll do it the right way this time, okay? I promise."

The angry, uncomfortable tension from before had completely dissipated, leaving behind something tender and soft that left their chests feeling warm. It was like they were in their own little bubble, protected from the outside world where they both had piles upon piles of issues to deal with. Anything else they could deal with later, but for now, they would let themselves relax.

They sat in pleasant silence for several more minutes, George letting Dream fawn over him as his way of apologizing back. He knew that Dream was a touchy person, and the few weeks they'd spent not being near one another must've been awful for the taller man. Dream's gentle touches

were relentless in the way that they were almost constant, his hand always stroking or petting some part of George's head- but never going far enough to make him nervous or uncomfortable.

"Can I see your eyes? Please?" Dream quietly asked, which in turn promptly took George by surprise, "You can say no, of course. I just want to see *you*."

"Yeah," George murmured, his breath hitching slightly as Dream hesitantly slid the glasses off of his face. He knew that he probably should've said no, that letting Dream see his eyes when he felt so emotional still was dangerous- but he couldn't bring himself to care all that much. George watched as Dream placed them on the floor next to him with the utmost care, before lifting his gaze once more when Dream's hand instantly moved back to cup his cheek again.

"You're so pretty, George," Dream praised, sounding slightly awed as he gently swiped his thumb underneath George's left eye. He kept his gaze strong and unbreaking, not even looking away for a *second* when he started speaking again in hushed tones, "Such a pretty, pretty boy."

George's heart stuttered for a moment, memories of Dream calling him that at the party coming to mind. The way he'd said it now compared to then was so different, though, the ardor in current Dream's voice sounded nothing like the lust in party Dream's. He quickly brushed it off, forcing himself to live in the present as Dream's soothing compliments continued.

Dream smiled softly as he tucked that one, ever-present stray curl behind George's ear, his eyes sparkling in barely concealed adoration when George carefully nuzzled his cheek against his palm. He didn't need to say the words aloud for Dream to know he'd been forgiven, if only slightly. They had a long way to go, but they were getting there.

"This feels wrong," George sighed after a few moments, his voice startling the taller man out of his thoughts. When Dream almost instantly started retracting his hand with a worried frown, George hastily started to explain himself, "Not you! It just feels wrong to let you- I don't know... *pamper* me like this when I still haven't given you an answer yet."

"Oh." Dream winced, a small, sad frown overtaking his previously warm smile, "I'm really, really sorry, George. You know I don't care--"

George frantically shook his head, pressing his cheek more firmly into Dream's palm. God, when would Dream realize that they were just as bad as each other? Drunk Dream's an asshole, and regular George was flighty. He hated that the taller man was feeling so guilty, even if it was slightly deserved.

"I feel bad," George abruptly interrupted him, his voice coming out slightly louder than necessary in his haste. He didn't want to tell any more lies than he already had, but he was desperate to wipe away the sadness in Dream's eyes, "I don't want to lead you on any more than I already have, but I just can't do the whole... relationship thing yet, y'know?"

"Georgie," It was Dream's turn to interrupt, a fond chuckle rumbling out from his chest as his thumb shifted to swipe under his eye distractingly, "It's *fine*. Don't worry yourself with that shit anymore, alright?"

"What?" George frowned in confusion, "Why not?"

"Because I don't need an answer," Dream replied, adoration so clear in his eyes and voice that George's heart started squeezing painfully in his chest. Dream slowly leaned forward to rest his forehead against George's own, letting out a sigh of content when George didn't try to move away, "So long as I can have you like this, I'm happy."

“You don’t have to do that for me, Dream,” George muttered, his arms rising to loop behind Dream’s neck as the younger nuzzled their foreheads together, “I know you want more than that.”

“I do,” Dream admitted truthfully, scooting forward on the floor so his and George’s knees were touching, “I can wait, though. Take as long as you need to think things through.”

“And if I decide I want to stay just as friends?” George inquired slowly, not missing the small flinch Dream gave at the question. This was the one question that could make or break their new ‘relationship’. If Dream wouldn’t be able to remain as just friends, which is ultimately what George wanted, he would forego this entire idea altogether.

“...Then I’d be okay with that too,” Dream hummed after a few moments, his tone laced with sincerity. Maybe George wasn’t the only untruthful one here. He gently tugged one of George’s hands off of his neck, lowering it down until their hands were intertwined and placed on his lap, “I mean it, George, seriously. I’ll take whatever you’ll give me.”

“I believe you,” George relented, pushing his forehead a little firmer against Dream’s own. He fiddled with Dream’s fingers, the younger observing him do it with fond eyes, “And thank you.”

“Thank you too,” Dream grinned, lifting their interlocked fingers to press a light kiss to the back of George’s hand. George shivered at the touch, quietly watching as Dream pulled away again, “Was that okay?”

“Yeah. It was okay, Dream.” George nodded, smiling at the other’s thoughtfulness. It was a total change from how Dream had been acting at the party, the care in which he was treating George with at the moment being the complete opposite of the rough kisses they’d shared just a few days prior.

They fell into another comfortable silence, George focusing his attention on playing with Dream’s hands. It was such a simple touch, but one that warmed Dream’s heart as *George* had instigated it himself. That meant he was trying too, that George secretly wanted this as much as he did. Even if he didn’t know Georges’s true feelings, this was enough.

“What does this make us?” Dream asked carefully, immediately wanting to take back his words when George froze, “You don’t have to answer that, fuck, I’m sorry-“

To his surprise, George burst out into a bout of light giggles, a wide grin replacing his previously passive smile. Dream watched as George’s eyes crinkled up from the force of his laughter, and decided then and there that he’d never seen something so beautiful before. The glasses on the floor next to him glinted back at him in an almost blinding fashion, and Dream almost hated them for hiding such a pretty sight from him.

“I don’t know,” George’s laughter slowly died down again, “Friends who kiss sometimes?”

“Friends who kiss, huh?” Dream repeated the words to himself, pretending that they didn’t taste bitter in his mouth. He let out a snort in disbelief, his grin quickly matching George’s own, “I can live with that.”

“You think so?” George smiled, though his question was completely genuine. He squeezed Dream’s hand, and for the first time since they started talking about their feelings, George sounded a little scared, “You *can* say no, Dream. I don’t want you to feel, like, *forced* to accept this or something.”

“Don’t be dumb, Georgie,” Dream sighed, “This benefits me just as much as it does you- if not

more. You haven't forced me into anything."

"If you're sure," George relented, smiling slightly when Dream squeezed his hand back. There was a nagging voice at the back of his head warning him that this wasn't going to go down well, that he was just going to get hurt, but he was too elated in the moment to listen to it. All that mattered now was that he and Dream were okay again- or as okay as they could be given the circumstances.

"...Can I scent-mark you?" Dream asked carefully, wincing once he realized what he'd said. Clearly, he hadn't meant to verbalize that train of thought. His eyes screwed shut in embarrassment as he started to ramble again, "Fuck- you can say no, I'm sorry. My Alpha's just going fucking *insane* right now because you don't smell like me and-"

Fuck Dream *and* his pretty olive-colored eyes. They were a completely unfair weapon that should be made illegal in all 195 countries. George was only a man- a simple, *slightly* infatuated man who physically could not bring himself to say no when he saw Dream's puppy-dog expression.

"Calm down, Dream," George interrupted through a light giggle. Dream's eyes snapped open again at the sound, something that George found delightfully endearing and only served to make him laugh even harder. Shit, he was *really* going all out on foregoing his usual precautions today, huh? He sighed once he'd calmed down again, tilting his head to the side invitingly, "Yeah, you can."

Dream instantly darted forwards, his neck rubbing against George's own in an almost frantic need to cover him in his scent. George had to restrain a happy purr, his own body relaxing as the smell of sandalwood and the beach filled his senses once again. It was perfect, and George rewarded Dream for it by lifting one of his hands to pet Dream's hair gently.

He was thankful that Dream couldn't see his face at that moment, because the pink flush to his face and the gold tint to his eyes would've *definitely* given him away.

Dream scented him for a lot longer than Sappnap had, seemingly taking his time as he brushed against George's skin. His hot breath was blowing softly against George's gland, too, and there would almost certainly be a *different* kind of problem if Dream didn't stop. Luckily, Dream forced himself to pull away before the situation became too domestic, pulling away with a dazed, but thankful-looking expression.

"Better?" George hummed, keeping his eyes shut for a few moments as he willed away his Omega side. He opened them slowly, letting out an inaudible sigh of relief when Dream didn't react with anything other than a warm smile.

"*Much*, thank you." Dream sighed in relief, shooting George one of his infamously blinding grins as he reached down to intertwine their fingers again.

They chattered lightly to one another for almost an hour after that, ultimately deciding to forego attending lunch altogether. They hadn't let go of one another's hand once either, and though their palms had eventually started to feel clammy and sticky, neither boy wanted to let go for fear of breaking the peace. The school bell ringing once more is what tore them apart in the end, both of them reluctantly agreeing that they needed to attend their next class unless they wanted to reap the consequences.

"Hey," Dream hummed as they stood up, gently sliding George's glasses back onto his face for him, "I'll see you later, yeah?"

George flushed at the action, his heartwarming at Dream being so thoughtful. He honestly didn't want to go, would much rather stay in their secret little classroom, but knew they had to, "Text

me?"

"Of course." Dream chuckled, the noise sounding brighter than it ever had. He pressed a final, friendly kiss to the back of George's palm, squeezing his hand once more before finally leaving the room- leaving George standing there alone with a giddy smile on his face.

Maybe this "friends who kiss" thing could work out after all.

Chapter End Notes

i hope you enjoyed! and thank you all so much for 14k hits!! that's crazy honestly :o i love and appreciate all of you so much <3

also a big thank you to mj, who's now the beta of this work and also helps with plot stuff too :D hopefully, there'll be less typos now LMAO

remember that 90% of stuff in this fic is purposeful or has a meaning! i try to include hidden clues and stuff sometimes too :] the story is going to be fairly fast-paced from this point onwards, which is being done intentionally! it's important for dnf's dynamic in later chapter <3

eleven

Chapter Summary

Dream's POV time! An insight into his backstory, his feelings for George, and their situation.

Chapter Notes

hi everyone!!

slight tw: this chapter describes unhealthy/toxic relationships in non-graphic detail. i personally don't believe that it's construed as abusive, but i feel like the tw is necessary anyway. there are also VERY brief mentions of underage, consensual sex. please skip Dream's backstory if either of these things might bring harm or hurt to you.

stay safe, and i love you all <3 enjoy!

Dream knew from the very first moment he'd seen George that he was completely and utterly *fucked*.

His mom had always said that he had a big heart, one that was far too soft and trusting for the kind of world they lived in. Dream, only being young at the time, had shrugged it off as a strange 'grown-up' compliment, not knowing the weight behind those words until he was much older. It was a true enough statement, one that became more and more apparent once he'd started high school.

Everything went to shit from there.

Dream started getting crushes left, right, and center- ones that would take immense coaxing from his friends to realize the fragility behind them. At one point, it felt like he was falling in love with someone new every other week. It wasn't even an exaggeration to straight-up call it 'falling in love', either. When Dream fell for someone, he fell *hard*- something that had become enough of a problem for him to avoid talking to new people altogether. If he didn't meet anyone new, then there was an even lesser chance of him starting to like someone again.

Instead, he slept around at the start of his junior year with the few people he *did* know, craving intimacy and fake love from those that had already rejected him or from relationships that had ended up going nowhere. It was an extremely unhealthy habit, one that left him feeling devastated one too many times to be considered anything other than harmful- but it was all he had.

Then his ex came along.

She was great, at first, seemingly having the *exact* same problem as Dream when it came to falling too fast. They got on like a house on fire, their friendship quickly turning into a full-fledged relationship within only two months of knowing each other. She'd asked him out during Dream's

junior year, just after he'd turned 17 and she'd turned 18.

It had started off 'normal' enough, with them being your stereotypical, clingy, Alpha and Omega couple. Dream was always by her side, much to his friends' chagrin, and would only *not* be seen with her when they were in class- but even then, he'd still reek of her overly flowery scent. She followed him everywhere too, going so far as to leave her own friend group to sit with Dream's *just* so they could be closer.

Everyone had found how close they were sweet in the beginning, some even calling them adorable or 'couple goals'- but it didn't last for very long. Eventually, the red flags started becoming apparent to everyone but Dream himself, and no one except his friends' tried to save him. Dream lost several people that year, promptly foregoing his slight popularity to stick with those that truly cared about him.

What had started off as just regular teenage clinginess quickly became borderline extreme possessiveness, his girlfriend not allowing him to have any time by himself or with others. If he wasn't physically with her, then she'd be blowing up his phone, demanding proof that he was where and with whoever he said he would be. Dream hastily grew tired of it, exhausted from constantly feeling on edge at the thought of making her mad.

Despite her obsession with him being loyal, she was completely unfaithful to him in return. Dream couldn't even count on *both* of his hands how many times she'd cheated on him during the span of their relationship, and that was with the few affairs he actually knew about. God knows how many she'd *truly* had.

Sapnap, unsurprisingly, was the one to finally get through to Dream, and was ultimately the person that saved Dream from his increasingly depressive state. He'd calmly sat Dream down and gone through the rights and wrongs of a relationship, somehow managing to explain how toxic it was despite having never even dated anyone himself. Dream broke up with her in an explosive mess that same day, almost exactly four months after they'd first started dating, and he'd stayed single ever since.

Dream had to count his blessings in the aftermath, and was ultimately thankful that he hadn't picked up on any of her awful behaviours. He wasn't clingier than he had been before he met her, wasn't obsessive or toxic to the people around him. He was regular ol' Dream, and he'd never been so immensely grateful to just be *him* before.

He'd spent the rest of eleventh grade trying to heal, avoiding all and any romantic situations to focus on slowly fixing himself. Thankfully, his then ex had left for college, giving him the time and space he needed to do so. Over time, he managed to mostly abandon his dangerous habits and become a better person for it. A tiny part of him was terrified to love again, to let himself grow attached only to be treated so horribly once more. Unfortunately for him, his brain still hadn't rid itself of his overly loving personality.

Cue, George.

If you asked Dream when he'd first started falling for George, he wouldn't really be able to tell you. At first, Dream was drawn in by just how *pretty* George was, but soon after getting to know him, his personality became his all-time favourite thing. It was easy enough to start liking him, despite the mysterious aura he constantly had surrounding him. He was sweet and funny and *adorable*, just the kind of thing you'd want in a friend.

Except, Dream didn't want him as *just* a friend.

Those lines had started blurring pretty fast, the liking he had for George quickly shifting from platonic to something more. It had scared him, originally, but as time went on he'd come to terms with it for what it was. Dream grew to accept his weird behaviors towards love as he aged and learned that it was just easier to let it happen rather than try to fight it.

Of course, Dream was *terrified* to fuck things up with him. Despite his 'love' problems, he'd never had a crush on a friend before- not one that could be considered serious, at least. All the crushes he'd had had all been on people he'd only spoken to briefly, and never anyone actually close to him. George was the first of his kind, and that was frightening in itself.

George was... different. He was new and exciting, and the closed-off energy he had filled Dream with curiosity. He wanted to know anything and everything he could about the shorter boy, and find out what exactly made him such an enigma. Dream wasn't stupid, either, he knew that George was hiding stuff from not only him, but their friends too. He couldn't bring himself to care, though, not wanting to accidentally cross or push any of George's boundaries.

Clearly, Dream had focused a little too hard on being mindful and not enough on their developing relationship, as now he found himself falling for someone once again.

He couldn't tell George that, though. If there was one thing he'd been disappointed to find out about the older boy, it was that he was flighty at the best of times. George didn't like change or anything sudden or new, making him almost the exact opposite of Dream himself. In theory, they should've clashed like two opposing magnets, but somehow they ended up getting even closer.

Maybe the whole opposites attract theory wasn't such bullshit after all.

It seemed like George was just as attracted to Dream as Dream was to him. The only problem between them being that Dream's open, oversized heart gave his love and affection out freely- whereas George's own heavily protected one refused to let him revel in it. However, that didn't stop Dream from continuing to lavish him in his love, and eventually, the shorter boy started to accept it.

Dream grew to be completely, hopelessly enamored with him.

He wouldn't say he was *in* love with him, not yet, but Dream almost definitely liked him in a way that a friend shouldn't.

It was too fast, faster than Dream normally fell for someone. It almost felt inevitable, though, the way he'd been drawn into George from the start being a clear indicator of just how they would develop. He knew George didn't feel the same, knew that the older boy wanted nothing to do with a solid relationship or any kind of genuine romance.

And for once, Dream was okay with that.

Somehow, he'd dug himself so far down the 'liking George' rabbit hole that he genuinely didn't mind not being able to call him his. So long as he could still be George's friend, could still talk to him in class and sit with him at lunch, they'd be okay. When George had started avoiding him after their 'almost' kiss, Dream felt as though his heart had been split in two.

The rejection had never felt so *painful* before, and a part of Dream was almost grateful that George was gone so he could process it in peace. He did feel bad for how it impacted their friends, though, Sapnap's murderous expression the day he'd told him what had happened ingrained permanently into his mind. He'd truly never meant to split them all up for his own selfish desires.

Then the party happened, and that changed *everything*.

It was true that Dream had absolutely zero recollection of the entire night, no memories of having even spotted George's face coming to mind no matter how hard he tried. He'd been well and truly in his Alpha state, the dangerous amount of alcohol he'd ingested only further worsening his mind's capabilities. The last thing he could remember was helping Wilbur hang up LEDs around the house, and that was it.

Had Dream actually been able to recall the events of the night, he'd almost completely understand if George started avoiding him- or even decided to unfriend him altogether. What he did was awful and utterly inexcusable, pre-rut or not. It was the kind of situation that he'd probably always feel a little guilty over, and wasn't something he'd be forgetting anytime soon.

So imagine his surprise when George told him he wanted to kiss him again.

Dream was *elated*, his head feeling so light and content that it'd almost felt like he was soaring through the clouds. Despite all the shitty things he'd done, George still wanted him as a friend, and that was all that mattered to him. Being able to kiss him now too came as a massive shock, but definitely not an unwelcome one.

Even through his rut-muddled brain, Dream still vowed to himself that he wouldn't take advantage of George's new boundaries to their friendship. He wouldn't kiss him- hell, he wouldn't even *hug* him without asking first. The last thing he wanted was a repeat of the party situation, and thus Dream set a rule in place that would prevent that from happening.

They wouldn't kiss at *all* whilst he was in pre-rut, both for George's and his own wellbeing. He didn't want to hurt George by forgetting something they'd done again, much less hurt him by accidentally going too far. The words "friends who kiss" left a bitter taste in his mouth, matching perfectly with the slight nausea he felt whenever he thought about it. Of course he wanted more with George, who wouldn't? But, he'd take what he could get, and would much rather be able to love him subtly than not at all.

For the first time in a long time, Dream would willingly let himself succumb to unrequited love, and focus on giving George his all as just his friend.

x-x-x-x-x

Dream didn't get to see George again until the next day.

They texted almost constantly throughout the rest of the day, sending each other blurry selfies and little bits of information they'd been unable to share whilst George had been avoiding him. The conversation slowly turned into an undecipherable mess as time flew by, George's sleep-deprived texting becoming apparent through all the illegible messages he'd sent Dream.

They'd talked well into the next morning, Dream not switching off his phone until George sent a final goodnight text at 3 a.m. He couldn't bring himself to regret it, though, not even when he forced himself to wake up at ass o'clock for school. The November air felt even chillier than October's was, and he almost mourned giving George the thick jacket he'd worn at the cinema.

He'd had to sit through two boring, unnecessarily long lessons before he could finally see George face-to-face again, his heart pounding excitedly at the prospect of getting to sit next to him. It would be the first time they'd ate lunch beside one another in weeks, and Dream couldn't help but admit that he was anticipating it.

The minute the lunch bell had rung, Dream was all but racing out of his English Lit class, clumsily pushing past the crowds of strangers in the hallways in his haste to get to the cafeteria. He'd never felt so desperate to see the shorter man before, but could easily chalk it up to his pre-rut making him clingy or just a strong desire to see him now that they were okay again.

Dream was overjoyed to see George already sat at their table- in his usual space next to him, no less. He looked adorable, swamped in an oversized hoodie to protect him from the cold fall wind. He was all hunched over, too, making him look even smaller than usual as he quickly tapped away at something on his phone.

He could honestly wax fucking *poetry* about how beautiful George was. If he wasn't already acing his English class, then he'd sure as hell get an A just by describing him. George always looked flawless, never a strand of hair out of place (minus that one, lovable little curl he had next to his ear), and seemed meticulous with his appearance.

He was all soft edges and flushed skin, too, something that Dream found to be both endearing and sweet. Even still, George had this sharp, cold edge to him that instantly drew people in- and Dream was no exception. He'd seen firsthand the kind of power George had, and both sides of him made Dream just adore him more.

He dropped his bag on the table before sliding into his seat with a bright grin, only growing in size when George turned to face him with a matching one, "George," Dream called in greeting, completely focusing in on him as he blocked out the other people around them.

"Dream," George's smile somehow grew even more, and Dream ached to see the way his pretty eyes scrunched up from the action like he knew they did. George let out a quiet yawn, stretching his arms out across the table much like a cat before slumping against it, "You okay?"

"Never better," Dream hummed, tracking his movement like a hawk. Everything George did seemed so effortlessly charming- fuck, even his *yawn* was adorable. He bit back the fond coo that threatened to come out, instead letting a knowing half-smirk overtake his features as he tilted his head to the side, "You look pretty tired."

"No shit, I wonder why?" George snorted, sitting upright again to lightly whack him on the shoulder, "Maybe if a certain *someone* hadn't kept me up till fuck knows when, I'd be a little more awake."

"Come *on*," Dream snickered back, his hand lifting to gently grab his wrist in an attempt to stop any more hits, "*You're* the one that insisted we keep talking. I wanted to go to bed at like, one a.m. or something, but *you* wouldn't stop texting me!"

"You could've just... I don't know, aired me," George hummed, his voice lilting in a way that Dream knew was a challenge, "You know I wouldn't have cared."

"Oh yeah?" Dream raised his eyebrow up at him in disbelief, tightening his grip slightly on George's thin wrist when the shorter man only childishly stuck out his tongue at him in response. Dream was, unsurprisingly, the first to crack, letting go of George's wrist with a fond chuckle, "You're such an idiot."

They were both completely oblivious to the absolutely bewildered looks their other friends were sending them, focused solely on one another as they continued messing around. Dream didn't even hear their frantically hissed whispers, too absorbed in the light teasing George was giving him. Things almost felt like they were back to normal, despite the obvious changes to their relationship, and he *loved* it.

Dream didn't move to touch George any further than the hold he'd previously had on his wrist, no matter how much he secretly wanted to. George hadn't mentioned anything about how to act in front of their friends, and he didn't want to accidentally cross that boundary on the first day of their friendship being fixed.

"So, I think I speak for *all* of us when I ask this- but what the *fuck* is going on with you two?" Quackity abruptly asked, snapping both Dream and George out of their respective focus on one another. When neither boy made a move to reply, Quackity sighed, "George, you were literally avoiding him like the plague up until last week. What changed?"

"Uh, well," George stammered, pausing only to look up at Dream for help. Dream shrugged in response, causing him to scowl before slowly trying to explain, "I don't know... we just made up?"

"Overnight?" Karl blinked, tilting his head to the side like a confused puppy.

"I guess so," Dream answered for him, shrugging once more in the direction of their friends. Under the table, Dream's hand slowly sneaked over to George's, wrapping his pinkie around the older boy's own in a way that he hoped was reassuring. Quackity was still staring at them skeptically, causing Dream to huff in frustration, "Seriously, what's the problem? Shouldn't you guys be happy that we're chill again?"

"We are," Sapnap claimed slowly, eyes locked onto Dream's face in suspicion, "It's just a little strange, s'all."

"Whatever," Dream purposefully averted his own gaze, not wanting Sapnap to be able to catch anything from his expression. He felt George squeeze his pinkie lightly, and Dream turned to face him instead with a soft, grateful smile. The small touch was enough to relax the abrupt tension in his muscles, and he slowly sunk down into his chair, "Can we drop it now? Please?"

"I guess." Sapnap sighed, realizing that he wasn't going to get anything else out of his best friend- not in front of everyone else, at least.

The group fell into silence again after that, some feeling slightly more awkward than others. Dream was honestly just glad to have the attention off of them again, even if it made things a little uncomfortable. Every so often, Dream would flex his hand against George's, almost testing the waters in fully intertwining their fingers.

He wouldn't push that limit, though, not yet.

"Anyway, you coming to soccer practice tonight?" Sapnap cleared his throat, looking purposefully over at George, "Y'know we're starting prep for the end-of-season match."

"Yeah, I'll be there," George hummed, doing his usual routine of stealing Quackity's apple off of his lunch tray. Dream subtly slid his water bottle closer to the shorter boy as his way of 'providing' for him, his stupid Alpha instincts playing up thanks to his pre-rut. George took an exaggerated bite of apple before speaking through muffled mouthfuls, "You nervous?"

"Nah," Sapnap snorted, sharp eyes not missing the barely discreet action Dream made with his bottle, "We beat those fuckers every year, dude, it won't be any different this time around."

"Whatever you say," George sighed, a light half-smirk forming on his mouth as he shifted to rest his head on his hand. Dream was drawn to it like a moth to a flame, his tongue subconsciously darting out to wet his own lips hungrily. Fuck, why was everything he did so *hot* all of a sudden? George continued talking after a moment, completely oblivious to Dream's internal suffering,

"They have all those new guys though, y'know? We gotta be careful."

"We'll be fine," Sapnap huffed, "They all fuckin' *suck* anyway."

"Ooh, okay *Toxicnap*," George teased, grinning when Sapnap only rolled his eyes in response, "Now I kinda hope that we *do* lose just so I can see your expression afterward."

"Don't jinx it!" Karl abruptly butted in, smiling contentedly when Sapnap pressed a kiss to the side of his head in gratitude. Dream watched in barely concealed jealousy as Karl moved to openly hold Sapnap's hand on top of the table, "Sap gets all grouchy when you guys lose in your *practice* games, I don't really wanna deal with the level of sulking he'd do in an actual match scenario."

George let out a loud snort at that, the sound causing Dream's heart to constrict painfully in his chest. Everything about George was just so, so perfect. Dream watched in rapt interest when George reached for his bottle, his chest unknowingly puffing out in pride when the older man started drinking from it. *We did good, we provided for him.*

"New guys?" Dream decided to rejoin the conversation, feeling George jolt against his hand in surprise. He supposed he *had* been uncharacteristically silent for a while, too lost in thoughts of the pretty boy sat next to him to talk beforehand, "On Tech's team?"

"Technoblade *is* one of the new guys," George answered, letting out a light giggle when an embarrassed flush rose to Dream's cheeks, "Well, kinda. He only started at Manburg last year, right?"

"Mm, his dad pulled him out of boarding school early," Dream nodded before letting out an amused chuckle, "Fuck knows why, though. He refuses to tell me."

"So there's him, but there's a few other players too, right?" Bad tilted his head to the side as he thought it through, having finally pulled himself away from the barrage of texts on his phone to respond to the discussion taking place, "From what I heard at the party, there's roughly three or four newbies total... I think?"

"Why the *fuck* were you learning about soccer stats at Wilbur's goddamn party?" Quackity snorted in disbelief, "Were you *seriously* that bored?"

"*Someone* had to stay sober and make sure you muffinheads didn't accidentally get alcohol poisoning," Bad sniffed, shooting Quackity a disapproving glare, "So when I wasn't looking out for you guys, I was networking."

Both Dream and George released barely discernible wincing at the mention of the party, turning to make awkward eye contact before spinning away from each other again. Okay, so they weren't over the situation yet. Good to know. Dream couldn't help but notice that George still hadn't let go of his pinkie finger, though, instead having moved their hands onto his lap so it was more comfortable for them both.

Interesting.

"Oh, that's right!" Quackity suddenly shifted to face George with wide eyes, swiftly dragging Dream out of his thoughts, "One of the newbies was asking about you. Blake? No... Brad? Who the hell was it?"

"You mean Brian?" Bad offered helpfully, "Brian Davis? He's super new to Manburg, I think, but he seems nice enough."

"Yeah, him!" Quackity quickly nodded his head, still staring at George who dawned an extremely startled, if not confused expression, "Apparently, he saw a picture of you during their rival team analysis session and thought you were cute... or something. I was too drunk to remember the specifics."

"So?" George frowned, taking another sip from Dream's water bottle before putting it back down onto the table. At Quackity's dumbfounded look, he sighed, "I just don't get why that matters, y'know? S'not like I'm going to talk to him."

"...Why not?" Bad inquired genuinely, unable to see the massive problem he was about to cause by asking, "Maybe it'd be good for you to meet someone outside of school! And he's really not that bad, in all honesty, not like some Beta males are."

Internally, Dream was raging.

He could barely hear his own thoughts over the sound of his Alpha howling angrily in his head, desperately clawing at the mental barriers he'd put up to stop him from falling into his Alpha state at school again. The thought of George with another guy set something dark off within him, no matter how wrong or unjustified the rational side of him knew it was.

Realistically, Dream knew that George didn't want to be with anyone. The older boy had said it himself that he just couldn't handle an actual relationship right now, and that included one with Dream. Still, the idea of some other guy thinking *his* George was 'cute' made something twisted and heavy coil around his throat, choking him until it was all he could think about.

He knew it was wrong to be feeling so possessive over someone who wasn't even his, but *fuck* it was hard not to be. No matter how hard Dream tried to fight it, his Alpha was already seeing George's Beta as, well, *theirs*. That combined with his problems surrounding love just *spelled* disaster, and adding his pre-rut into the mix was bound to cause some issues eventually.

As soon as his rut was over and he was finally fully in control of himself again, Dream would be having some *very* choice words with his inner Alpha.

"Uh, Dream?" Quackity chuckled shakily, abruptly snapping Dream out of his own head. He slowly turned to face Quackity, who flinched back a little in return before gesturing between himself and Bad, "You're kinda growling at us right now, dude."

That made Dream pause.

Low and behold, a thunderous rumble was coming from deep within his chest, so loud it managed to startle *him*. Dream's eyes went wide as he frantically tried to dispel it, pounding his fist on his chest a few times as though he was choking before looking over at Sapnap in his panic for help. Sapnap looked just as shocked, eyebrows raised so far up on his forehead that they almost blended in with his fringe.

Dream made the mistake of looking away for a moment to check on George, whose unreadable expression did nothing to help the noise radiating from his body and instead caused it to intensify. He looked dazed, and even with his glasses still on, Dream could tell that those pretty eyes of his were wide in surprise.

Karl wasn't faring much better, his neck bowed submissively as he leaned against Sapnap's side for support. The action set something off in Sapnap, whose wide-eyed appearance quickly turned into a glare of anger. Dream was still frantically thumping his chest, desperately trying to stop the aggressive sound coming out of him.

Suddenly, Dream felt a light touch to his hand, causing his anxious movements to cease nearly entirely.

With the growl from before gradually lessening into a grumble, Dream tilted his head down to stare at said hand, watching in fond surprise as George drew light circles onto his palm with his index finger. He was absolutely mesmerized, gaze completely locked onto the soft way George was touching him.

"Feeling better now?" George murmured, a small smile on his lips as he lifted his head. Dream barely saw it, still too focused on the affection he was being given to look up.

"...Yeah," Dream cleared his throat after a moment, relaxing as the last of the growl left his body, "Thank you."

George nodded at him in response, and Dream looked up long enough to catch both the action and the still slightly dazed expression on his face. The rest of the group was still in various states of shock, Bad and Quackity both looking like scolded little kids as they recovered from their chastised states.

Sapnap still looked rightfully pissed, though there was a hint of something undecipherable in his eyes as he watched Dream and George's quiet interaction. His arm was curled protectively around Karl's waist, who had turned to bury his face deep into Sapnap's neck the moment the growling stopped.

"Fuck," Dream hissed under his breath as a headache started to form out of stress. He hated being an Alpha sometimes- but *especially* during his pre-ruts. No matter how bad they'd been before, they'd *never* gotten crazy enough to make him growl at his friends, for fuck's sake.

George stopped his gentle touches at the muttered curse, his hand hesitantly shifting to lie flat against Dream's own instead. Dream barely even registered what he was doing as he intertwined their fingers, George's thumb instantly moving to stroke across his knuckles in a soothing manner. It was perfect, and exactly what Dream needed to calm his Alpha down again.

"Dream," Sapnap called, his no-nonsense tone of voice quickly grabbing Dream's attention from George, "Let's go to gym early today, yeah?"

"Yeah, okay," Dream carefully agreed, not wanting to piss his friend off any further. He reluctantly pulled his hand away from George's to grab his bag, instantly mourning the loss of warmth as his fingers wrapped around cool fabric instead. With a loud groan, he tugged his bag over his shoulder, watching in mild envy as Sapnap bent down to kiss Karl on the cheek.

"Before we go... I just," Dream sighed, shifting nervously on his feet. He looked back up to meet the eyes of everyone else sat at their table, making sure to glance at each of them individually before continuing to talk, "I'm really sorry that you all had to, uh, hear that. I swear I didn't mean to, and I'm not actually mad at-"

"We get it, Dream," Bad interrupted with a kind, knowing smile, "Pre-rut, right?"

"Y-Yeah actually," Dream stammered, his eyebrows furrowing slightly in confusion, "How'd you know?"

"We've been friends for years, you muffin," Bad snorted light-heartedly, "While I can say that you've never *growled* at me before, I have seen you in pre-rut many, *many* times."

"Oh," Dream blinked, "That's true."

"Exactly," Bad nodded, seeming appeased by his agreement, "Besides, I've got that weird scent thing, remember? I can tell when someone's nearing their heat or rut, like, *weeks* before it actually happens."

"Right," Dream slowly hummed, "I'm really sorry for doing it anyway- even if it *was* an accident."

Sapnap moved around the table to clap him on the shoulder at that, smiling in a way that Dream knew meant he was forgiven. Karl looked calmer after the apology, too, his head having raised to stare directly at Dream with a soft grin. Bad looked the same as always, offering pieces of his lunch to George who wolfed them down readily.

Huh, well that was mildly concerning. George was eating like he hadn't in *weeks*, though logically Dream knew for a fact that George had already eaten something he bought himself for lunch and Quackity's apple. He made a mental note to start bringing some extra snacks in with him for the older boy to have during their breaks.

Besides the ravenous eating, George looked mostly at peace, staring up at Dream with his usual, content gaze. Quackity was the only one who still looked slightly ruffled, his sight flicking respectively between both Dream and George in suspicion. It made the hairs on Dream's arms stand up in nerves, Quackity's piercing eyes making him feel an unsettling amount of anxiety.

"That's fine and all, man, y'know I really don't care about the growling thing," Quackity waved him off, finally settling his skeptical look onto Dream's form, "But why'd you only do it when we mentioned George talking to some other dude?"

"Erm," Dream looked over at George for help, who only cocked a confused eyebrow up in return. Dream sighed, dragging a weary hand down his face before speaking again, "I don't know, dude, I guess my Alpha's just an idiot? It's been acting up lately in general, so i don't think it was anything specific to George."

A blatant lie, obviously, but Dream wasn't about to confess his more than platonic feelings for one of his best friends in *front* of said best friend.

"...Fair enough," Quackity relented, though his gaze did *not*. Dream didn't need to be some kind of genius to recognize that the look he was being given was conveying one thing, and one thing only-*I know you're lying.*

"Cool," Dream slowly backed away, not bothering to check whether or not Sapnap was following him as he started shuffling towards the cafeteria exit, "I'll see you all later, yeah?"

With that, Dream high-tailed it out of the building, long legs quickly making their way towards the gym.

X-X-X-X-X

Unfortunately for Dream, Sapnap could be *fast* when he wanted to be.

He'd barely made it to the tables scattered around the outside of the gym before he was being pounced on, Sapnap's arm wrapping around his neck as he dragged him towards one of the less-damp-looking benches. Dream knew far too well that when Sapnap decided he wanted a 'talk', that there was literally no way of getting out of it.

"So," Sapnap sighed, shuffling over to sit down on the opposite side of the table, "Talk. What's really going on, dude?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," Dream sniffed, pointedly looking at anywhere other than Sapnap's face. When he heard a scoff of disbelief come from the shorter man, he gave in a little bit, rushing to add-on to what he'd previously said, "I genuinely don't know what you want from me, Sap."

"Yes you do," Sapnap hummed, flicking a piece of dirt off of his hoodie, "You know *damn* well what I'm talking about, Dream."

"Oh really?" It was Dream's turn to scoff this time, his arms crossing over his chest in a defensive manner as he eyed Sapnap up and down, "No, I don't think I do."

"Jesus, Dream," Sapnap finally caved, his voice gradually starting to get louder in irritation as he slammed his fists down against the table, "Just fucking *talk* to me, man, I'm worried about you."

Dream started a little at the aggressive action, finally realizing just how stressed his best friend actually was. He knew he had a problem with not noticing when others became affected by his own issues, and clearly whatever Sapnap was upset about now was no exception. It didn't take long to figure out what he was eluding to.

"Me and George?" Dream asked slowly, waiting for Sapnap's nod of agreement before continuing to talk, "We're fine now, I guess. You didn't get that from how we were acting earlier?"

"God, you're really fucking annoying sometimes. Y'know that?" Sapnap snorted, running a hand through his hair tiredly, "I just want to help you, dude. Don't shut me out like before."

The before he was speaking of was way back with Dream's ex, when Dream became so insecure as a result of her cheating that he refused to let anybody in- Sapnap included. It put a massive strain on their friendship, and the only reason it hadn't crumbled was because of Sapnap's unwavering loyalty and love for him.

Sapnap ended up being the first person Dream told everything about his ex too, and was also the first person to try and get him help as a result of said situation. He, unknowingly, saved Dream's life by doing so- and Dream swore that he'd never put his friend through something like that again. Until now, obviously.

"You're right, I'm sorry," Dream groaned, averting his gaze to his hoodie sleeve as he pulled at a loose thread, "What do you want to know?"

"Anything and everything, I guess," Sapnap answered, "I don't know *shit* about what's been going on between the two of you anymore, bro, it's a little concerning."

"Yeah, I get that," Dream inhaled a little shakily. He knew he needed to tell Sapnap, no matter how much the words might hurt actually coming out, "Well, we kissed."

"You what?" Sapnap's eyes widened in shock, "Sorry, can you repeat that? I think I might've, like, blacked out for a second there."

"We kissed, Sap," Dream slowly repeated. He almost laughed when he looked up and saw the gobsmacked expression on his best friend's face, the tension easing a little on his painfully constricted heart, "Apparently, I ran off with him and kissed him in Phil's office at Wil's party."

"Apparently?" Sapnap's huffed in amusement, one of his eyebrows rising in confusion, "What do you mean *apparently*?"

"I mean apparently!" Dream burst out, the words feeling as though they were being ripped

forcefully out of his throat, "I don't fucking *remember* it, Sap, I'm going off of what George told me himself."

"Well... shit," Sapnap whistled, "That's messed up, Dream."

Dream stared at him in blatant annoyance, something Sapnap only sent back to him tenfold. He knew he fucked up, had been wracked with almost painful guilt ever since George told him about the whole thing- but it still wasn't exactly *nice* to have his mistakes thrown back at him. Dream knew better than anyone how screwed up the entire situation.

"I was drunk as hell, dude," Dream explained, a guilty frown overtaking his neutral expression from before, "Like, *seriously* wasted- I don't even remember the party starting. George said that I saw him with Wilbur and just... flipped my shit, probably from my Alpha state acting up, and then we kissed."

"And he forgave you for that?" Sapnap carefully asked, "No offense man, but I'd be *pissed* if that was me."

"Yeah, he forgave me," Dream replied, drawing small circles on the table just like George had been doing on his palm earlier, "I don't really know why he did either, to be honest. He was more upset over the fact that I forgot than anything else."

"You got lucky," Sapnap snorted, "Karl would have me by the fuckin' balls if I ever tried some shit like that."

"Damn right he would," Dream grinned back at him, "I wouldn't want those nails of his *anywhere* near my dick, to be honest, they look fucking *lethal*."

"Ugh, dude, don't put images like that in my head," Sapnap grimaced, shuddering dramatically in disgust, "Let's not talk about my... *Karl's* nail problem. We're meant to be talking about you and George."

Dream paused at his weird phrasing, a puzzled expression taking over his features. Realistically, he knew that Sapnap and Karl weren't together still as Sapnap definitely would've said something to him- but that didn't stop him from being confused. It had been years, so why the hell hadn't they pushed past the just friend's category yet? Maybe it was similar to George in that one of them wasn't 'relationship ready'.

Sapnap rarely confided in him about his relationship problems with Karl, preferring to (unhealthily) keep it bottled inside until his emotions exploded everywhere. Dream had been there a few times to pick up the pieces after one of his breakdowns, and they were *not* a pretty sight. Fortunately, only a couple had been related to his not-boyfriend.

"We were, but y'know you can talk to me about Karl too, right?" Dream hummed, not missing the way Sapnap fidgeted uneasily at the prospect, "I'm here for you, man, always."

"I know," Sapnap softened slightly, an unusually small, but grateful smile taking over the awkward frown on his lips, "Thanks, Dream."

"Anytime," Dream brushed off the sincerity, instead focusing on changing the conversation away from Sapnap's clearly uncomfortable topic, "So, d'you want me to tell you why me and George are suddenly okay again?"

"Fucking *finally*," Sapnap chuckled, "Yes I wanna know, dude, tell me already."

"Y'know when we skipped lunch yesterday?" Dream responded, pausing to get the other's acknowledgment before continuing, "He dragged me into some empty classroom in the Maths block and asked if I had an answer for him- to which I was like... what? So anyway, I-"

Dream carried on retelling the events of the day before for several more minutes, fuelled only by the wide-eyed, intrigued look Sapnap adorned in response. He normally wasn't really that much of a gossip, but *fuck* it felt good to finally get everything off of his chest to someone. Sapnap was a good listener, too, responding to Dream every so often with a comment or question that helped him gather his thoughts.

"-So then he said we could be 'friends who kiss'," Dream trailed off, his nose scrunching up in distaste, "I said yes, obviously, and that's where we're at now."

"Dude, why the *hell* would you say yes to that?" Sapnap abruptly cut in with a hiss, "You're just *asking* to get your heart broken again by doing that."

"I know, okay?" Dream cried, his eyes already threatening to sting with hot tears at the thought, "I fucking know what I'm doing to myself, alright? It's *fine*."

"In what fucking universe is that *fine*, Dream?" Sapnap shot back, his voice growing to be just as loud as Dream's, "You're going to get hurt and it'll be the situation with your ex all over again!"

"George is different!" Dream snapped, his hands clutching desperately at the hem of his hoodie to try and ground himself, "He isn't like that!"

"And how do you know that for sure, Dream?" Sapnap asked coldly, and Dream's entire world suddenly froze, "You've known him for, what, three... maybe four months? How can you tell that he's different?"

"He's not- he... he wouldn't..." Dream stammered, his eyes flickering back and forth between red and green as he struggled to control himself, "I don't-"

"Hey, hey- just calm down, alright?" Sapnap winced, watching him in concern for a few seconds before giving in and moving to sit next to him, "I'm not trying to upset you, man, it's just the truth. I love George like a brother, y'know? I just don't want to relive what you went through last year."

Dream could only breathe shakily in response, ignoring the instincts demanding he punch Sapnap across the face to lean against him instead. Sapnap quickly took the hint, winding one of his shorter arms around Dream's torso as they slumped against one another. It wasn't exactly a hug, not really, but it was the closest thing to one both men could handle in their current states.

"I think I love him, Sap," Dream croaked miserably, noticing but not choosing to comment on the visible flinch Sapnap gave off at the comment, "It happened again."

"...It's gonna be okay," Sapnap eventually hummed reassuringly, forcing himself to get over his own conflicting feelings about the situation to comfort his friend. His hand gently rubbed up and down Dream's arm, "You've gotten past all your other... *crushes*, yeah? You can get over this one too."

"I hope so, but you get why I couldn't say no to him now?" Dream chuckled, the sound coming off empty and humorless more than anything, "I couldn't even if I wanted to- I'm too far gone already. My Alpha views him as ours as well."

"Fuck, and that's why you were growling in the cafeteria?" Sapnap hummed understandingly. When Dream nodded in return, he sighed wearily "You've gotta end it, dude, before it gets even

worse."

"I just told you I *can't*," Dream huffed, pulling himself away from Sapnap's side, "I *need* him, Sap, in any way that he'll let me have him. He's different."

"I know," Sapnap sighed, patting him on the thigh before moving to stand up again, "I know, okay? And I *know* you're going to keep doing this *thing* with him no matter what I say. Just... just be careful, alright? You're both my friends, man, I don't want to see either of you get hurt from this."

"I promise," Dream nodded, shooting him a smile that he hoped seemed reassuring. It seemed to do the trick, though, as he watched Sapnap's body relax marginally.

"Are you sure it's not just, like, lust or something?" Sapnap questioned randomly. He grinned sheepishly when Dream turned to stare up at him in a mix of embarrassed surprise, "It's just... you've been in or near your rut twice since we've met him, right? Are you sure it's not just your Alpha being weird?"

Huh, Dream had never actually thought of it that way before.

"I mean, maybe?" Dream grimaced, his brain working overtime as it tried to process his words, "I don't know, man, I guess we'll have to wait and see when my rut's over with."

"I guess we will," Sapnap easily agreed, yawning as he stretched his arms up into the air, "Just keep it in mind though, yeah? You could just be confusing the lines or whatever."

"Yeah," Dream hummed, shifting to stand up as well, "It'll be fine, you'll see. I'll have outgrown this stupid crush... or whatever it is before the end of the school year, I promise."

"Whatever you say," Sapnap grinned, chucking Dream his bag before swinging his own over his shoulder, "Anyway, you ready for gym? I heard we're doing-"

Dream continued to let Sapnap talk his ear off about sport as they entered gym class, though his mind was still focused on the pretty brunet he was risking everything for.

twelve

Chapter Summary

the boys go round george's house to (platonically) netflix + chill :]

Chapter Notes

i'm so sorry this update was so late :(writer's block + mental health crap + google docs not working has rllly been kicking my ass lately lol. hopefully i can fall back into my usual 2-3 times a week postings again soon!!

slight tw!! this chapter mentions/ shows signs of parental neglect, symptoms of anxiety/panic attacks, and possible symptoms of dissociation. make sure you stay safe, and i love you all <3

enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"What're you guys doing after school?" Quackity hummed, trying and failing miserably to sound nonchalant.

George rolled his eyes in fond annoyance, continuing to mindlessly dig into the bag of chips Dream had brought in for him. Their relationship had been steadily improving again after the kissing incident, and they both quickly grew back into their old friendly habits. The rest of their group had promptly gotten over their own initial shock at seeing both Dream and George back to their normal selves, and didn't even bat an eye at their 'strange' behaviour anymore.

If anything, things between himself and Dream were even better than before. George was less hesitant to seek out what he wanted- feeling more secure in himself and his friendship with Dream now that they'd had a talk about boundaries and what everything meant. He would happily take the taller boy's hand under the table now, and even went as far as to let himself indulge in the soft affection Dream seemed to like lathering him in.

Dream had become increasingly more doting as time went on, too. George wasn't stupid enough to not notice the way Dream had started constantly giving him different snacks, or carrying around a spare water bottle everywhere with him just in case George needed one. It was nice to feel so looked after, George thought.

He tried not to let himself indulge in the attention too much, though. He didn't want to come across as though he was using Dream for his gifts, or that he simply wanted Dream's money and care, and not the boy himself. George had mentally begrudgingly accepted the fact that what he felt for Dream ran deeper than what it probably should've- even if he couldn't express it out loud.

If George was less oblivious, however, he would've noticed that Dream's actions were on par with what his ancestors would describe as 'courting'. Dream was subconsciously trying to prove that he

could provide for George, that he could cater to his every need, and even that he would be good 'mate material'.

But again, George was oblivious to a fault, and simply registered Dream's behaviour as his way of apologising for the whole situation from before.

It didn't help that Dream was in pre-rut still either. He'd been in it for almost three weeks now, and became more and more restless and Alpha-like the longer it went on. George knew that Dream had *some* kind of mental claim on him- if the growl he'd been letting out during lunch the week prior was anything to go by- and somewhat dreaded what would happen if Dream randomly went into rut around him.

Maybe 'dreaded' wasn't the right word to use.

George had never seen an Alpha in rut before, or even an Omega in heat- despite being one himself. He had no clue how they usually acted in their different states, and could only picture the awful stories he'd overheard about them in the hallways whenever he thought about it. He knew that everyone was different, though, and that Dream could act the complete opposite of the gossip he'd listened in on.

Whenever George thought about it, shivers would travel down his spine- and not necessarily in a bad way.

George was brought out of his thoughts from a gentle poke to his shoulder, jumping slightly from the suddenness of it. He quickly sat upright from his slouched-over position, turning his head to the side with wide eyes to see Dream grinning at him softly. George huffed out a light laugh.

"You okay?" Dream hummed, voice low enough that the other members at their table wouldn't be able to hear, "You seemed really out of it."

"I'm fine," George's smile grew at Dream's concern, his hand snaking over to Dream's own from underneath the table to squeeze it reassuringly, "I promise, I was just thinking."

"Oh? About wha-?" Dream started, only to be interrupted by a boisterous shout from Quackity.

"George!" Quackity called loudly, causing George to startle enough to visibly jerk away from Dream and drop his hand. Quackity didn't seem to notice though, or simply didn't care enough to comment on it as he continued speaking through the action, "Tell them what we're doing tonight! They don't believe me."

Sure enough, all three of their other friends were watching him with skeptical looks. Karl seemed more confused than anything, his purple eyes glinting with something unreadable as they flicked between both Quackity and George. George made a mental note to bring it up with him later.

Sapnap didn't really appear confused, seemingly more just in a state of doubt over whatever bullshit Quackity had spouted whilst George had been zoned out. Bad looked like he was about to spontaneously combust, an angry vein popping out on his forehead as his eyebrows furrowed in disbelief.

"What did you say to them?" George frowned, his eyes squinting behind his glasses in mild irritation.

"I told them about our little sleepover tonight," Quackity grinned, his tone laced with mischief. George instantly stiffened, the tips of his ears turning pink in embarrassment, "I was just saying how we chill and eat pizza and *smoke*-"

"Oh my God," George groaned, quickly lifting his hands to cover his face. His embarrassment promptly deepened into mortification at the younger's words, unable to bear the thought of having any of their other friend's disappointed gazes on him.

The problem was that Quackity *was* telling the truth- well, at least partly. George had tried weed a few times, the first few being a result of peer pressure at parties more than anything. He'd done it twice whilst hanging out with Q, but never enough to get him properly high. After all, he didn't want to risk non-sober him revealing all his secrets.

Their Friday night sleepovers had been a 'thing' ever since they'd met back in Freshman year. They did it alternately, switching to the other boy's house the following week to change things up a little and to relieve the pressure on their parents. George hated to admit how much their stupid little tradition meant to him.

They were relatively chilled sleepovers, too. They'd mess around and watch movies, order a shitty takeaway, and have deep conversations. The weed had only become a thing they did at the start of their Senior year, and as they'd integrated into Dream's friend group, it had stopped. It was obvious to George that Quackity was only bringing it up now to make him seem cool- but that didn't stop the humiliation pooling in George's stomach.

"Wow, our sweet little Gogy is a stoner," Sapnap teased playfully, mirth filling his eyes at George's embarrassment, "Whoever would've guessed something like that?"

"Shut the fuck up," George hissed in return, peeling his hands away from his face to shoot the other a venomous glare, "It was like, *twice*, okay? I haven't done it since."

"Whatever you say," Sapnap's cocky grin grew as George's scowl deepened. He then had the audacity to wink at him, chuckling obnoxiously when George started shuffling as though getting ready to launch at him from his seat.

George didn't get that far, however, as Dream's warm hand suddenly curled comfortingly around his again. The small action gradually made him settle back down into his chair, grumbling curses under his breath as Sapnap's laughter grew even louder. Dream's thumb started to drag over his knuckles, the soft sensation causing George to instantly fall silent.

"Hey, none of us actually really care, I promise," Dream murmured, his thumb smoothing over the ridges between George's knuckles soothingly, "I mean, I've done it a few times, too. I know for a *fact* that Sap and Karl have once or twice too."

"Yeah?" George hummed, relaxing into Dream's touch with a soft sigh. He couldn't see the warning glare Dream sent Sapnap as he slumped further into his seat, his own eyes fluttering shut at how peaceful he suddenly felt.

Honestly, Dream had to have magic hands or something. Whenever his long fingers touched or caressed George in any way, his brain instantly melted into a pile of hopeless goo. Butterflies would swarm annoyingly in his stomach at the *smallest* of touches, and his body would become rendered absolutely useless as it started to relax. Fuck Dream and his stupid, beautiful hands.

"The rest of you should come tonight too," George spoke before really thinking it through, his mouth moving on autopilot thanks to Dream's distracting affection, "You can all sleep round mine."

"Woah, really?" Quackity instantly lightened up, having fallen into a guilty silence at the teasing George had been given earlier, "That'd be so sick, dude. We've never done one with anyone else

before."

"Sure, why not?" George yawned. God, he was tired- *and* hungry. He used the hand not in Dream's to start eating again, stealing a few grapes from Dream's tray. He didn't see Dream observing the action with rapt interest, or the way the taller man secretly started nudging the tray even closer to him.

"Are you sure, George?" Karl asked carefully, his indecipherable gaze flitting between George, the food he was eating, and Dream. He spoke again seconds later, coughing for emphasis at certain words, "Are you *sure* that's not gonna cause any *problems*?"

"Nah, it'll be fine." George waved him off, ignoring the barely audible groan of frustration Karl let out in response.

Truthfully, George didn't really know what they were talking about. He'd only really been paying on and off attention ever since he'd stopped arguing with Sappnap. Each small grape he'd ingested felt like a little stone dropping down into his stomach, making him feel all full and heavy, and ever so tired.

"I dunno, I'm not sure about sleeping over," Dream fidgeted uncomfortably, a tense frown taking over once passive expression, "I don't like how risky it is."

"You talkin' about your pre-rut?" Sappnap asked unabashedly. When Dream nodded slowly in response, he let out an abrupt snort, "Dude, seriously? C'mon, you've been in that state for *almost* three fucking weeks now. I doubt hanging out at George's place for *one* night is gonna do anything."

"Really, Sap?" Dream huffed in annoyance, raising an incredulous blonde eyebrow up at him from across the table, "You say that now, but how'd you like it if I suddenly went into rut around Karl? You *really* want to put him at risk like that?"

Sappnap narrowed his eyes at the thought, not-so-subtly wrapping one of his arms around Karl's waist protectively. Dream let out his own snort at the action, rolling his eyes at how defensive his friend was being. Karl looked mildly uncomfortable, not wanting to be at the center of his two friend's argument.

"Okay, okay. How about we all just calm down, hm? Do some deep breathing," Bad was quick to mediate, demonstrating how to heavy breathe in an almost dramatic fashion. He held his hands out in a placating gesture when everyone's heads suddenly snapped around to face him, "How about we just hang out for the evening, and if nothing happens and everything's fine, we stay the night?"

"...I'm fine with that." Dream agreed after a moment. He took the last of the grapes from his tray before offering them to George, waiting until the shorter man shook his head to swallow the entire handful whole. George wasn't the only one struggling with a newfound sense of hunger. Though, Dream's could definitely be chalked up to his pre-rut.

George was drawn out of his head fog at the sound of Dream agreeing, finally clocking into what they were all discussing. His eyes widened in nerves, bolting upright in his seat as he started planning out the logistics. Fuck, there was so much he needed to do before they came over. He'd need to clean the house, stock up on drinks, hide anything sus-

"George?" Quackity tilted his head to the side, "You doing okay, man?"

"I'm fine, I just..." George shook his head, pink lips quirking downwards into a small grimace, "I

need some time before you all come round. Is that, uh... is that okay?"

"Of course it is," Bad frowned in concern, "But George, you know you don't need to do anything to impress us- right? We really don't mind what your house looks like."

I know," George sighed, the hand not in Dream's lifting to rub self-consciously at his chest, "I've just never had anyone other than Q round before, y'know? I haven't had the time to clean or anything with how busy I've been lately, and I really don't want your first time at my place to be spent feeling disgusted or something."

"You know we wouldn't..." Bad replied hesitantly, his voice trailing off when George minutely shook his head.

Bad must've picked up on something desperate in his body language, hazel eyes gleaming in understanding as the discussion promptly died down. George was thankful to have such supportive friends, especially ones who cared about him as much as they did. The rest of their group were watching the interaction with mixed expressions, the most predominant emotion being very visible concern.

George quickly changed the main topic, switching it to what time they should arrive and what to bring. He hadn't fully planned out just how he was going to entertain a group of energetic boys at his little house yet, but fuck was he going to try his best. This was the first time in his entire life that he'd had a group of friends, and like hell was he going to let something as simple as a sleepover ruin it for him.

"It's gonna be a good night, boys," Quackity suddenly grinned, any leftover tension from before slowly dissipating at his enthusiasm, "Bring cash and beer, 'cause we're about to pop the *fuck* off."

X-X-X-X-X

As soon as the bell rang to signify the end of his final period, George was out of the classroom and running home.

Thankfully, his house was only a roughly twenty-minute walk away from school, and that time was cut in half when he sprinted- which he was currently doing. The urge to get there as soon as possible only spurred him on, causing him to almost trip several times in his short journey back home. His brain was *screaming* at him to clean his house and make it presentable, to make sure that he'd hidden any potential secret giveaways, and to mentally prepare for having more than one person round.

He managed to reach his front door in record time, panting heavily as he passed the threshold into his cluttered hallway and dropped his heavy backpack onto the floor with a loud thump.

There was a nagging feeling in the pit of his stomach, something incessant and anxious making him feel all jittery. He knew that it was probably just regular teenage nerves causing him to feel that way, this being his first-ever time hosting a group of people round his house. Of course he'd be nervous about it being good enough!

He knew deep down that his friends weren't judgmental, not the kind of people who would ever say something mean about his house- at least, to his face. Still, George had to remind himself that they were in fact all good individuals that cared about him, not the condition of his home. It didn't really stop the anxious thoughts from building, but it helped settle any unnecessarily rude remarks he was thinking about his friends.

There was another part of him, though, smaller and less loud but still very present.

George had this... *urge* in his stomach, one that he could recognize quite easily as belonging to and being fuelled by his Omega. It was a strange feeling, a mix of desperation and the need to please twisting together into something uncomfortable. It caused him to take one look at his messy living room and freeze, hands twitching anxiously at his sides.

Why did everything feel so *wrong* all of a sudden?

Almost immediately after that thought had entered his head, George's mind went blank, his body moving on autopilot as he started to clean the room. The floor was swept and mopped, his curtains pulled shut to add a warmer atmosphere to the place, and his windows opened to let a breeze in before he could even register what he was doing.

George wasn't a lazy guy by any means- not if you took into account his hectic school schedule and weekly soccer practices. That combined with the symptoms of fatigue that he got from his suppressants left him feeling *exhausted* by the time school was finished. As a result, he never really found the time to do basic tasks such as cleaning or tidying.

He still tried his best, though. George always made sure to wash his dirty plates and cups after use to prevent a build-up, would try and properly tidy his room at least once a week, and only *sometimes* forgot to do his laundry. Things were a lot worse when his parents had first up and left- but he didn't really like to remember those times.

A barely nineteen-year-old boy should not be left or expected to look after a fairly large two-story house by himself, especially with everything said boy already had going on in his life.

George shuffled over to start working on the couch, neatly folding and stacking his impressive number of blankets into a pile before focusing on the pillows. They were easy enough, his brain and Omega subconsciously knowing what placement would make them look the most aesthetically pleasing and welcoming. Had he been in his right mind, he would've been embarrassed by how long he took to organize a bunch of *stupid* pillows.

Time wasn't really a concern for him, though, not when his mind still felt so foggy. He started tugging at the giant cushions lining the back of his L-shaped couch, resting them all flat down on the floor in front of him before kneeling down in front of them. He randomly started plumping them up, small fists banging uselessly on the unmoving fabric with a small frown.

Well, that wasn't working.

George's frown quickly grew into a grin when he suddenly had a bright idea, slowly pushing himself back up off of the floor as he eyed the cushions smugly. God, he was a fucking *genius*. Instantly after George had stood up again, he was throwing himself back down, landing on one of the large cushions with his entire body.

Did it hurt? Yes, it *really* did- but George's concern with making sure his cushions looked perfect and comfortable outweighed his concern about his physical wellbeing. He repeated the action several times on each cushion, only stopping when he deemed them flat enough to rest a cup of water on.

George was panting heavily by the time he'd finished, laying in a starfish position on his floor next to his now fixed pile of cushions. He could feel the bruises forming along his body from the rough treatment it'd just been forced to deal with, yet couldn't find it within himself to care once he saw how fucking *good* his cushions looked.

Once his heavy breathing began to die down, George stood up with a shaky groan, slowly moving the cushions back into place on the couch before letting out a sigh of relief. He *really* wasn't built for manual labor. He focused his attention on lighter, easier chores almost instantly after, trying to make the living room as presentable as possible.

His brain slipped even deeper into its foggy state as he carried out more and more meaningless tasks, his own consciousness nearly completely switching off as he bumbled around the place. He fixed the crooked angle of his TV, tidied the decorations on his coffee table, and turned off the main ceiling lights to turn on the more relaxing lamps dotted around the room instead.

George had to admit- his living room looked really fucking *good*.

With a final glance at the place, he deemed it satisfactory enough for his friends. George moved into the kitchen, where he spent another two hours cleaning the counters and sink, scrubbing the grime off of his oven top, and sweeping his floor once more. It took less time than the living room, though, but George still paled when he caught sight of his kitchen clock, starting to feel panicked once he saw the big hand land on the five.

He only had three hours left.

George quickly dropped the damp sponge in his hand into the sink, shaking his head to clear the fog as he raced out the room. Fuck, he'd gotten *way* too distracted. With the kind of speed he'd never possessed before, George made his way upstairs, only going still when he reached the door that led into his parent's bedroom.

He hadn't been in there since they'd left- not properly, at least. He'd taken one step into it to close the door a week after he realized they weren't coming back, and that was two to three years prior. The anxiety from before started clawing at his stomach as he eyed the slightly chipped wood, hands twitching once more by his side.

Realistically, he knew that none of his friends would ever try going in if he explicitly told them not to, but that was when they were sober. He'd seen how they all lost their inhibitions whilst drunk, and George knew for a fact that at *least* Quackity would be bringing alcohol with him. The *last* thing he wanted was to walk in on an Intoxicated Karl and Sapnap fucking on his mother's unchanged, floral bedsheets.

He wanted to lock the door, but that meant going inside the room- and George didn't feel ready for that yet. He hadn't even noticed his hand trembling as it subconsciously reached out towards the golden doorknob. George forced it back down against his side, shaking his head as he walked away from their room. He was willing to risk his friends having drunk sex in there if it meant that he himself didn't have to go in.

George's bedroom is exactly what you'd expect if a teenage boy.

It was similar to Dream's in the sense that he had a colour scheme- specifically, dark blue with white accents. His wallpaper was a kind of royal blue, a few crumpled sports posters hung up messily along a couple of his walls and glow-in-the-dark stars decorating his ceiling in an unorganized, yet semi-cute fashion. He only had one window on the opposite wall from the door, which always remained open behind his plain white blinds.

He had a nice carpet, at least! Well, it *was* nice when you could actually see it. Currently, his floor was completely covered by random assortments of school stuff and mounds of dirty clothing. With all the stress he'd been dealing with relating to Dream and their whole... situation, he'd been too tired to clean.

With a determined huff, George rolled up his hoodie sleeves, swiftly getting to work on clearing up his floor. It took him approximately forty-five minutes to finish tidying things up, dumping his dirty clothes into the laundry room to deal with after his friends had left. He hoovered once he was done, grimacing at the layers of dust that came up as a result.

Yeah, he was never letting his house get into such a state ever again.

The other areas of George's bedroom were already relatively neat, both his bedside tables and his desk clear of any unnecessary clutter from how often he used them. Actually, the *only* thing he even had on his bedside table was his galaxy light projector- a gift from Quackity after a particularly rough month back in Junior year.

His wardrobe had a few post-it notes lining one of the doors, little anecdotes and doodles, positive messages, and important reminders glaring back at him from their place on top of the neon paper.

There was *one* place that had remained fully untouched throughout George's cleaning frenzy and would remain that way for a very good reason, too.

Whilst George definitely acted like a Beta 90% of the time, he couldn't help but slip into his more Omega-like behaviors whenever he was at home alone. They were hard to control, his Omega fighting through whenever he was in his bedroom to let him fully relax. Keeping ahold of such big secrets was exhausting, and sometimes giving into his second gender was the only thing that helped.

To put it simply, George had a nest.

His bed was very obviously the main feature of his room, taking up almost all the free space in there from the sheer size of it. On top of his mattress was a *huge* mound of pillows, random articles of clothing, and blankets, organized in a way that would seem messy and careless to anyone other than George himself- who thought it was *perfect*.

If Dream's jacket somehow made it into the nest, that was nobody's business but his own.

The urge to climb into it and sleep was almost overwhelming, the fatigue from stress-cleaning for so long finally catching upon him. His eyes flickered to the analog clock on his desk, and he let out a childish whine at the time. His friends would arrive within an hour, giving him little to no time to have a nap.

George forced himself away from his bed, frowning stubbornly to himself as he marched into his bathroom. He didn't *need* to sleep- not yet.

He spent his last free hour showering and getting dressed, ditching the sweat-drenched clothes he'd worn to school in favor of wearing a new clean, soft hoodie and an even comfier pair of basketball shorts. His friends had all seen him in a fucking *princess* dress, he wasn't about to start fretting over his appearance *now*.

George decided to forego his usual glasses as well, deciding that he felt strong enough to not wear them. His usual eye color wasn't something to be ashamed of, and the chances of his Omega slipping out and turning his irises gold was slimmer thanks to their meetup happening in the safety of his own home.

Just as George was about to go grab a drink, his front doorbell rang, causing his heart to start beating a little faster in nervous anticipation. He shuffled over to the door, relaxing as he looked through the tiny peephole to see Quackity.

"Oh my God, you know you can just come straight in." George snorted as he opened the door, ushering his friend in before slamming it shut again.

"I know, but it's fun making your lazy ass get up to let me in," Quackity teased, making a fake noise of pain when George pinched the skin on his upper arm in retaliation. The beer case in his hand clinked noisily when he stopped at the archway leading into George's living room, eyes wide in shock, "Holy shit, man. You really went all out, huh?"

"Is it too much?" George winced, gaze flitting in between Quackity and the room nervously, "I don't know what happened, honestly. I guess I *might've* gone a little overboard."

"No, dude! It looks great, I swear," Quackity quickly reassured him, shuffling forward to place the beers carefully down onto the glass coffee table in front of him, "I was just surprised, y'know? I've never seen it look so... tidy before, I guess."

George nodded in response, letting out an inaudible exhale of relief as he moved to flop down onto the couch. They sat in comfortable silence as Quackity reached for the remote, flicking through Netflix with practiced ease to find a semi-decent movie for them all to watch. He knew that George was shitty when it came to making decisions- and the older man was grateful that his friend never tried to make him.

The doorbell rang again before George even had the chance to open his mouth again, letting out a quiet groan as he got up to open the door once more. He softened when he saw that it was Bad, welcoming the other boy in with a warm greeting and a grin. He lit up even more when he saw that Bad had gone through the effort of bringing snacks, too, his hunger having only continued to grow after all the cleaning he'd done.

"Am I early?" Bad asked sheepishly, dropping his snacks down by the beer case before flopping down on the couch next to Quackity, "I wasn't really doing anything at home, so I thought I'd come by a little earlier."

"You're fine, Bad," George waved him off with a reassuring grin.

Bad seemed to settle at that, sinking into George's freshly plumped couch cushions with a relaxed sigh as Quackity finally picked a movie. It was a shitty animated comedy from the early 2000s, something that George predicted wouldn't really be focused on by any of their friends once the beers were cracked open.

George held back a shiver when Bad's curious gaze landed on him, seemingly analyzing George's eyes with great interest. Once he noticed George's discomfort, however, he stopped- sending him a reassuring grin and a thumbs up to quickly put a stop to it.

"When are the others meant to get here?" Quackity inquired after a few moments of silence, the only noise in the room coming from the film that he was watching in mild disinterest.

"Whenever Bad was *meant* to get here," George snorted, his laughter only getting louder when Bad let out an indignant squawk in response. He gradually calmed down again, "I dunno, honestly. I told everyone in the group chat to get here by eight-ish, but *fuck* knows if they'll actually be here by then."

"Ooh, *'fuck knows'*," Quackity repeated childishly, an evil, manic-looking grin rising to his face when George rolled his eyes, "You're so *British*, George."

"You're so annoying," George huffed in irritation, chewing on his bottom lip to stop the smile that

was threatening to break out from the teasing, "It's better than being American, at least."

"God, don't slander the country you live in George," Quackity whistled dramatically, "That's kinda fucked up, man."

"Y'know what, Q?" George sat up a little straighter, eyes narrowed toward his friend as the soul-crushing comeback he had prepared started to burn at the back of his tongue, "I-"

A sudden knock from the front door is what caused George to stop, the words threatening to spew out quickly retracting back into his throat. He got up off of the couch again, ignoring Bad's muttered, "Thank *God* ." as he made his way towards the hallway. Quackity was laughing his head off behind him, the sound instantly getting on George's nerves.

He opened the front door, grinning widely once he saw his three other friends stood on the other side. Karl came in first, eyeing George's house curiously as he hung up his thick coat- one that undoubtedly belonged to Sapnap. Sapnap himself trailed after Karl like a lost puppy, the drinks in his hand clinking together even louder than Quackity's had from his quick movements.

And then there was Dream.

The urge to please feeling from before returned tenfold at the sight of him, George's stomach doing nervous somersaults as he welcomed him into his home. Fuck, what if he didn't like it? Dream quickly came in and smiled at him affectionately, looking perfectly imperfect with his cheeks a little flushed from the cold and his big hands tucked safely away in the pockets of his grey sweats.

"Hey," Dream greeted warmly after a few seconds, his head turning from side to side as he took in what he could see of the house. He must've picked up on George's nervous shuffling, as he lifted one of his hands out from his pocket to gently squeeze George's shoulder, "You've got a really nice place."

"Yeah?" George brightly smiled up at him, his Omega preening happily at the compliment. He took Dream's hand from his shoulder, purposefully avoiding watching the taller boy's face as he carefully started to intertwine their fingers, "I'm glad you think so."

"Of course," Dream nodded slowly, his green eyes locked sharply onto their hands like a hawk, "I think it's perfect."

"Good, good- I'm glad." George hummed absentmindedly in reply.

George felt... *weird*. The energy between them was tense and stifling, but simultaneously the furthest thing possible from awkward. The air around them almost felt like it was being electrically charged, the smallest brush of Dream's thumb over George's knuckle sending pleasurable zaps down his veins like lightning bolts.

He couldn't say he hated it, though, not when Dream got that possessive gleam in his eye that made George positively *squirm*. He knew that it was a dangerous feeling to be having, especially with everything they'd discussed literally not even three weeks prior- but it felt too *good* to stop. Having Dream look at him like that made him feel all floaty and warm, safe in a way that he normally didn't on a day-to-day basis.

"George..." Dream murmured, raising his free hand to gently grip George's chin. George leaned into his hold almost immediately, letting Dream tilt his head up with nothing more than a stuttered breath.

"Dream-" George was about to call back, maybe ask for something ridiculous such as a hug or-

God forbid- a kiss, only to be interrupted by a loud groan coming from his living room.

"Are you two done fucking in the hallway yet?" Sapnap shouted, his voice laced with both annoyance and amusement. The sudden voice caused George and Dream to spring apart, both their faces burning a bright red in embarrassment as they shuffled away from one another.

"Fuck off!" Dream yelled back, shooting George an apologetic, yet sheepish smile afterward before moving to hang up his jacket.

George shook his head, clearing his head of the indecent thoughts from before. He forced on a more friendly grin, waiting for Dream to finish what he was doing before leading him into the living room. Their other friends were scattered around messily, already looking completely at home as they half paid attention to the movie playing.

Karl was sat comfortably on the couch next to Bad, who had shuffled closer to Quackity when George had gotten up, gaze flicking between the TV and his somewhat boyfriend every few seconds. Sapnap was sat on the floor in between Karl's legs, his eyes lidded in content as Karl sweetly played with his hair.

George directed Dream towards the seat next to Karl, waiting until he was fully seated before dropping down next to him. He wasn't about to let whatever had just happened ruined their night, much less their friendship again. He'd meant it when he'd told Sapnap that he was done with their vicious cycle of falling out whenever something weird occurred.

The group sat in comfortable silence for several long minutes before they started getting bored, the quiet living room instantly starting to fill up with mindless, light chatter again. Soon enough, they got bored enough for the alcohol to start being dished out, breaking carelessly into Quackity's case of beers to grab one for themselves. George was nicer than the others, though, and reached over to grab one more for Dream.

"Beer?" George hummed before taking a sip from his own can, slowly extending the unopened one over to Dream with his free hand.

"Pre-rut, remember?" Dream snorted. His laughter only grew when George's cheeks flushed red in embarrassment, "Unless you want a repeat of the party, I think it's for the best that I lay off the alcohol."

When George only frowned and raised an unimpressed eyebrow in response, Dream froze, a sheepish grin promptly overtaking his previously cocky smirk.

"...Too soon?" Dream winced.

"Just a little," George replied, gaze never leaving Dream's as he chugged down the first beer in *seconds*, his experience from the soccer parties he used to go to very brightly shining through. He crumpled the then empty can in his hand, placing it onto the coffee table before cracking open the one Dream had refused.

He didn't want to get drunk, not tonight, but having the pleasant buzz he always got after a few cans was exactly what he needed to relax. It didn't really alter his thoughts or actions, meaning that he wouldn't go totally wild or lose control of himself, but just about managed to calm down the anxieties he'd had about having new people in his house.

"Easy," Dream cooed lowly, gently pulling the second can away from his lips to place it on George's lap instead, "There. You're gonna drown yourself if you aren't careful, Georgie."

"Sorry," George murmured, the tips of his ears pinkening in humiliation. He kept the can firmly tucked away safely between his thighs, only relaxing when Dream shot him a warm smile of approval before turning around to talk to Quackity.

Why was he acting like such a people pleaser today? The mere *thought* of upsetting or disappointing his friends, especially Dream, sent waves of anxious distress crashing through his system- and George *knew* his Omega was to blame. Call it a gut-feeling or whatever, but he had an intense hunch that his stupid second gender was acting up for whatever reason.

It had been suspiciously quiet all day, not whining or grumbling in his head like it normally was. However, when it *was* about, it was loud as *fuck*- almost bursting George's poor eardrums from the force behind whatever weird noise it had made. He could feel it stirring from sitting in such close proximity to an Alpha, and he could only pray that it wouldn't try to make an appearance today.

"We're seriously still watching this?" George groaned as he took another languid swig of beer. His gaze eventually settled on the TV, cringing at the scene playing in front of him for a few seconds before turning his head to stare at Quackity impassively, "I thought they would've bugged you to change it by now."

"Nuh-uh," Karl spoke for him with a frantic shake of his head, his own beer can making a loud sloshing noise as it was jostled around from his rapid movements. He smiled at him mischievously, "I'm enjoying it! The shark dude is kinda hot, not gonna lie."

"What the hell, Karl?" Sapnap interrupted with a frown, tilting his head fully back so he could stare up at Karl's face, "Seriously? The fucking *shark* guy? If anything it'd be the sting-ray, he's a total dilt."

"I gotta go with Sap on this one," Quackity nodded, looking completely serious as his bleary eyes narrowed at the sting-ray man on the screen, "Sorry Karl, but the 'dilt'- his words, not mine- outweighs that fucking *loser* of a shark any day."

"What the fuck are you guys even talking about?" Dream gaped, his sober eyes wide in as he looked between all of his friends. When he got no response, he cleared his throat, somewhat shyly averting his gaze back to the TV as he said, "...I've only been in here for five minutes, but I gotta agree with Karl."

"Betrayed by my own brother, who would've thought?" Sapnap scoffed in disgust, "Neither of you has any taste."

"What do you think, Bad?" Quackity turned his attention onto the older boy, grinning very much like the shark in the movie, "C'mon, you can tell us."

The group fell silent as they awaited Bad's reply, sitting there with bated breaths as he took his time thinking it over. Everyone's body was tense in anticipation, excluding George, who just watched the others in disbelief, as Bad opened and closed his mouth a few times as he floundered for an answer.

"...The shark," Bad admitted, sounding both horrified and ashamed as his cheeks started to turn a little pink. Karl and Dream broke out in victorious cheers, smugly looking down upon Quackity and Sapnap who shouted various expletives and curses in frustration.

"Let's fucking go!" Dream cheered loudly, high-fiving Karl with such boyish enthusiasm that it made George's heart ache. As if hearing his thoughts, Dream spun around to face him again, his voice a little breathless from the yelling, "How about you, George?"

"Uh, well-" George stammered unintelligently, suddenly feeling very put on the spot as everyone's sharp gaze turned to face him. He looked up at the TV once more, analyzing both the discussed characters before taking a deep, shaky breath, "If I *had* to pick one, it would be the sting-ray. I'm going with Sap and Q."

"Fuck yeah!" Sapnap whooped, drunkenly stumbling over as he stood up to sit on George's other side and wrap an arm around his shoulder, "I *knew* you weren't tasteless like those dumbasses, Gogy."

"Obviously," George snorted, the alcohol buzz letting go of his restraints enough to allow himself to lean against Sapnap's side, "I'm always right."

"Let's not go *that* far," Quackity chuckled, quickly lifting his can up to his lips to hide the grin on his face when George turned to glare at him, "What? It's the truth."

"Whatever," George huffed, rolling his eyes for the sixtieth time that evening. He froze when Sapnap's hand lifted to cup the side of his head, slowly tugging him down until his face was pushed against the younger man's neck. George blinked, voice muffled by Sapnap's skin as he muttered, "Sapnap?"

"Relax, dude," Sapnap drawled, softly patting George's head, "We're just two homies cuddling it out, s'all."

Well, who was George to argue with that kind of logic?

He released a quiet sigh of resignation, gradually burying his face further against the other's neck as he relaxed against him. George was man enough to admit that it *was* kind of nice, Sapnap's warm, fiery smell encompassing him like a thick blanket. Maybe it was because he was somewhat tipsy, but Sapnap was actually a *really* good cuddler.

He couldn't really see how the others were reacting, but from the normal flow of conversation still going on around them, he could only conclude that no one really cared. George couldn't pick up on Dream's voice very often, meaning that the taller man was staying abnormally silent for once. A flash of worry went through George's gut, but he quickly passed it off as him overreacting again. Dream was *fine*.

George's head lifted for a moment, causing him to catch Sapnap's gaze. It was kind of awkward, honestly, but they thankfully just laughed it off. Still, Sapnap's eyes looked almost scrutinizing as they looked into George's own with mild awe. George sent him a curious look back, and Sapnap only smirked in response.

"Y'know," Sapnap started, lightly poking George's cheek with his pointer finger, "You've got really pretty eyes."

"What?" George's mouth parted in shock, a light blush spreading across his cheeks and the tips of his ears like a wildfire. In all honesty, George had forgotten that he wasn't wearing his glasses. The *last* thing he'd expected was for Sapnap to compliment him when he'd seen that look in his eye earlier, "You think my eyes are pretty?"

"They are," Karl chimed in from the other side of the couch, a small smile tugging at his lips. Then his gaze landed on Sapnap, and instantly hardened, "Ignore him if he's making you uncomfortable, though, he gets flirty when he's drunk."

"I do *not*," Sapnap scoffed, rolling his eyes at his somewhat boyfriend before looking over at

George again, "But yeah, dude, your eyes are fucking *sick*."

"Thanks, I think." George chuckled, laughing louder when Sapnap gave him a dorky thumbs up in response. It was nice to have his friend's approval, and thankfully none of them really seemed to care- which helped his anxiety greatly. With a tired yawn, he dropped his head back down onto Sapnap's shoulder, fighting back something akin to a purr when the younger man started petting his head again.

George knew it wasn't late into the evening yet, the clock only just having turned to nine o'clock when he'd last checked, but he was quickly starting to feel heavy and tired. He'd almost dozed off against Sapnap's shoulder, the soothing petting to his head hadn't stopped once since he was pulled into the semi-awkward embrace, and in doing so caused his sleepiness to only increase with every passing minute.

An unexpected movement is what jolted George awake, and he barely managed to stop himself from letting out a petulant whine at the harshness of it. Sapnap muttered an apology under his breath, his fingers tangling in George's freshly washed hair to gently pull his head in the opposite direction. George quickly found himself mourning the loss of Sapnap's scent, and had to fight back yet another noise of distress.

A voice in the back of his mind was saying, *What the fuck is wrong with you right now?* But he couldn't answer it with the foggy feeling still stuffing his brain.

George jolted again when Sapnap's cold face suddenly pressed against his own neck, the action causing immediate warning bells to go off in George's head. Even then, he didn't have it in him to do more than flinch away from the touch, causing Sapnap to swiftly pull back again with a grimace.

"Sorry," Sapnap tried to quietly apologize again, unknowingly gaining the attention of the other people in the room, "I forgot to ask first. You just smell a little.. different."

"Huh?" George muttered, fighting back the brain fog in an attempt to find out what was going on. If he was more alert, then there would definitely be a loud warning siren going off in his head. He opened his eyes a little more, staring up into Sapnap's curiously narrowed ones in confusion, "Ask what?"

"If I could scent you," Sapnap answered honestly, watching George's face for any signs of discomfort or disgust. He carried on when he found none, sounding a little tenser than before at George's lack of reaction, "Fuck, I'm *really* sorry, George. I just wanted to--"

"Move." Dream's voice suddenly barked out, the volume of it instantly shutting everyone else in the room up.

He was standing menacingly in front of them, large hands clenched into tight fists at his sides as he glared Sapnap down. George could smell the burnt sandalwood radiating from him and recoiled slightly, pressing further against Sapnap's side in an attempt to get away from it. Dream instantly softened at that, mistaking George's nervous movement as him looking for protection rather than a disliking to his scent.

"Dude, chill the *fuck* out," Sapnap glared right back at him, bristling slightly at Dream's abrupt temper. His arm dropped to curl protectively around George's shoulder, also mistaking his movements as being out of fear more than anything else, "You're scaring George."

"What?" George sat up at the mention of his name, eyebrows furrowed as he looked between the

two younger boys, "I'm not *scared*, you idiots. Your fucking angry scents were hurting my nose, so I was *trying* to block them out."

"Alphas and their stupid dick-measuring contests," Quackity sighed dramatically from across the room. Their heads all promptly snapped round to stare at him, causing him to hold his hands up in a defensive gesture, "Woah, I'm just sayin'. You little testosterone junkies didn't even notice that you were *hurting* George."

Dream looked like a wounded puppy at that, turning back around to gaze at George with pleading eyes. He shuffled a little closer, the burnt smell quickly disappearing from his scent as he tried to appease him. George settled slightly at that, pulling himself out of Sapnap's hold to sit by himself again.

Dream took that as a sign that they were okay again and sat back down on George's other side with a cautious smile. George only eyed him warily in response, the fog having fully dissipated from his head at the thought of his two friends fighting over something so trivial.

Karl, who had been watching them all nervously, tugged Sapnap back over to him, who in turn wrapped himself lovingly around him. Karl was taller, yes, but Sapnap managed to make him look anything but as Karl cuddled happily against his chest. Clearly, Dream wasn't the only one with jealousy issues.

"You're both so fucking dumb," George snorted, lifting his beer can once more to take an exaggerated drink before dropping his head down onto the back of the couch. When there was no response, he sighed, "Guys, I'm seriously okay now. Can we *please* just go back to normal?"

The room broke out into a chorus of agreements at that, and lighthearted conversations started up again between them all. George pretended not to see the look Dream and Sapnap shared, knowing it wasn't his place to get involved or comment on it. They had their own way of working shit out, and that was fine.

At one point, Bad had ordered their pizzas, buying enough food to feed an entire army. It was a necessary precaution, though, as anyone with basic biological knowledge knew that Alphas and Omegas could eat truckloads when hungry- especially Sapnap, Dream, and Karl. Bad had kept in mind George's weird cravings, too, and secretly ordered another pizza for him just in case.

The pizzas arrived pretty fast, much to everyone's happiness. Sapnap had gotten up to get them, carefully placing a tired Karl to the side as he moved to get up from the couch. George thought it was sweet- how affectionate they were to one another. Any tired feelings from before were quick to disappear at the smell of food, all the members of their group perking up once Sapnap dished out their individual boxes.

George's eyes widened when Sapnap handed him two, slowly dropping them down onto his lap, "Uh, why do I have two? I mean, I'm appreciative, but..."

"Oh, that's my bad," Bad grinned at him cheerily. He pulled out a slice of his own pizza, taking a small bite before saying, "You've just been so hungry lately. I wanted to make sure you'd eaten enough, y'know?"

George's heart warmed at his friend's consideration, a grateful smile working its way up to his mouth as he clutched his boxes, "Thank you, Bad. that's really sweet of you."

They ate in relative silence, too focused on eagerly wolfing down their pizzas to make any decent conversation. It was a nice silence, though, one that no one really seemed to personally mind- and

George was way too concentrated on finishing his food to really care that much anyway.

Eventually, the beers were brought out again, with everyone excluding Dream indulging in one with a belated group cheer (George had given Dream a Coke beforehand so he wouldn't feel let out). They watched in awe as Sarnap downed a beer in mere seconds, crumpling the can against his forehead before letting it drop to the floor with a cocky grin.

"Told you that I could do it," Sarnap childishly stuck his tongue out at Dream, "Beers are *nothin'*."

"Whatever," Dream chuckled, taking a light sip from his own Coke. He paused in contemplation, staring over at Sarnap with skeptical eyes, "Shouldn't you chill out on the alcohol, though? Y'know I can't take you, so I don't know how you're planning on getting home after this."

"Nah, we're good to drink as much as we want," Sarnap smirked, downing the last of his new beer as though to prove his point. He wiped at his mouth when he finished, releasing an exaggerated burp before saying, "Punz will pick us up whenever I text him and ask."

"Punz?" George cocked his head to the side as his eyebrows furrowed in confusion. From beside him, Dream let out an almost pained-sounding groan.

"Punz," Sarnap repeated, grinning somewhat manically as his chest puffed out in pride, "My older brother."

"I didn't know you had siblings," George hummed curiously. He dropped his empty pizza boxes onto the floor as he spoke, "Just him? Or are there more of you?"

"Just us," Sarnap affirmed with a small shrug, "We were adopted from the same place as kids, and Dad hasn't tried to take in anyone else after that, so..."

The clock had just gone past eleven when they finally finished eating, and the calm discussion from before changed into something less personal. George was, surprisingly, one of the first to have eaten everything, but he stayed quiet as he tried to digest it all.

To George's absolute pleasure, the shitty movie from before had ended whilst they were eating, and Quackity had connected his phone to the TV to blast some of his own random Spotify playlists instead. Now that everyone was okay again, George felt completely at peace, feeling more relaxed than he ever had before in his own home.

Everything just felt... *right*. He didn't feel lonely or sad anymore, not with all of his friends surrounding him. The music had eventually been turned down into soft background noise, and that paired with the gentle golden glow coming from the lamps he'd turned on earlier made George feel all warm and fuzzy inside.

"You okay?" Dream hummed, observing George's blissed-out expression with a fond smile, "You look exhausted."

"Yeah, I'm fine," George nodded, slowly turning his head to the side to send Dream a smile of his own, "Everythings... I dunno. This all just feels really nice, y'know? I've never done anything like this before."

"I get you," Dream's smile softened into something adoring again, the kind of smile that made George's heart do flips in his chest. One of Dream's broad hands reached out to pat his knee, but didn't move away afterward, instead resting on the bony limb as though it belonged there, "We can do this again, you know? This doesn't have to be a one-time thing."

"I'd like to, I think," George hummed his agreement, his lip quirking up into a half-smile as he said, "It's nice having you guys around."

The frantic cleaning George had done earlier was starting to take its toll on his body, a borderline painful ache settling in his joints as he struggled to fully relax and ended up squirming about instead. George wasn't unathletic by any means, having devoted several hours a week to his soccer practice at school- but cleaning? That was a whole other ballgame.

Dream noted his restless legs with concern, removing his hand from George's knee as though worried he was causing it.

"It's not you," George quickly reassured him, stretching his legs out in front of him with a wince, "I think I went a little too hard when I was cleaning earlier."

"Oh," Dream blinked. Ever so slowly, he curled one of his hands underneath the thigh that was closest to him, gently tugging George's leg onto his own with a notable amount of nervous hesitation. George was watching him in confusion but shifted around and dutifully lifted his other leg so that they were both strewn across Dream's lap, "Is that any better?"

Before George could respond, Dream's warm hands were on him again, massaging his legs with careful caution. His thick thumbs rubbed firm circles into the hard muscles of his thighs, pressing down on the most painful parts in a way that had George instantly crumbling into a floaty mess. He leaned sideways against the back of the couch, all but melting as he rested his head comfortably atop the couch cushion.

"Fuck," George exhaled, his voice sounding a little too breathless and airy for the situation they were in. His eyes fluttered shut when Dream's hands slid up a little higher, gently digging into a knot in his upper thigh with the utmost care. George shivered when the hands stopped massaging, switching to just softly rubbing up and down his legs, "Y-Yeah, that's better."

"I'm glad," Dream muttered, lowering his hands once more to massage his painful knees instead.

George didn't know whether or not he should mourn the loss of touch to his thighs, the sensitive skin there just crying to be stroked again. On the other hand, it was a dangerous game to play, one that would definitely breach the contracts of their 'friends who kiss' scenario.

Much to George's chagrin, his Omega had returned to whine loudly in his head, demanding that he make some kind of move on his friend. George secretly felt mortified, wanting nothing more than to reach inside his mind and throttle the damn thing until it fell silent.

He didn't *want* to be having those kinds of thoughts about Dream, not when he'd already put firm boundaries on their new relationship'. Still, his mind couldn't help but wonder whenever Dream's fingers dug in a little too hard, painful pleasure sending hot sparks of *need* up George's spine.

"Higher," George nearly whispered, speaking before knowing what he was saying. Unfortunately, Dream must've heard him- his wide eyes turning to look at George in shock and staying that way for a few moments before a cocky smirk that George recognized as the one Dream had adorned at Wilbur's party rose to his lips.

"What..." Dream hummed, his voice raspy in a way that made goosebumps start to rise on George's skin. He slowly slid his hand up again, perfectly curving his fingers over the stretch of George's thigh, "Here?"

George nodded against the couch cushion he was resting on, letting out a hushed sigh of contented

relief as Dream's fingers started massaging the muscle there again. It felt like both Heaven and Hell at the same time, the bliss he felt at the touch rivaling the risky thoughts in his head.

As George was about to open his mouth again, maybe plead for Dream to dig in a bit harder or to go a little higher *again*- Dream did the unexpected. He bent his head, eyes searing into George's own as he pressed his lips against the skin on George's lower thigh in a tender kiss.

George's brain promptly short-circuited.

His jaw dropped in surprise as Dream's soft lips pulled away, a furious blush rushing to his cheeks as the spot where he'd been kissed tingled incessantly. What the hell was *that*? Dream himself looked shocked, his own eyes wide as he stared down at George's leg.

"Sorry- I'm sorry," Dream stammered, looking extremely apologetic as he backed away slightly, "I honestly- I really didn't mean to. My mind made me do it before I could stop myself, y'know? And I-"

"Kitchen," George interrupted through gritted teeth, swinging his legs off of Dream and onto the living room floor before standing up, "Now. "

A chorus of childish ooh's followed them, which George promptly ignored in favor of trying to focus on his untameable emotions, leading Dream into his kitchen in stone-cold silence. He shut the door behind them, watching sharply as Dream looked around warily.

"You can't just *do* that, Dream," George scolded, walking forward until Dream's back was flush against his fridge, "You *know* you can't- so why the *fuck* did you?"

"I know, and I'm really, *really* fucking sorry," Dream quickly apologized, not meeting his eyes as he averted his gaze away from George's unreadable glare, "I know it was wrong, and I never should've done it in front of our friends either. I swear I wasn't thinking when I was doing it and-"

"Our friends? You think *that's* what I care about?" George snorted harshly, "Fucking hell, Dream, you're *seriously* dense sometimes."

"What do you mean?" Dream frowned, "Was it because I didn't ask first? Again, I'm really sorry and I never would've-"

"Shut up!" George burst out, causing Dream to immediately do as he was told. The pent-up frustration he'd been feeling since their first kiss was coming to a head, bubbling in his stomach like a volcano on the verge of eruption, "Just shut up! I'm not mad at what you did, okay? I'm mad that you do shit like that *knowing* what it does to me!"

"What the fuck are you on about?" Dream's eyebrows furrowed. He fell silent for a moment as he thought it through, eyes narrowing before widening bigger than George had ever seen them, "What does it do to you?"

"Don't act dumb," George sneered, poking one of his long fingers into Dream's chest. He falters for a moment, an embarrassed blush rising to his cheeks once more as he tried to get the words out, "You- you know how much I want to... kiss you- but you keep teasing me anyway. It's not fair, Dream."

"Oh, that," Dream muttered. He gently pried George's finger away from his now sore chest, holding onto the digit softly before bringing it up to his lips, placing a tender kiss to his knuckle, "I know, George, and *you* know I want to kiss you too. We set the waiting rule for a reason though, right?"

"One that *you* made," George huffed, though he was unable to stop himself from softening marginally at the kiss, "I would've kissed you the same day if you hadn't."

"You *know* we can't," Dream frowned, his hands gingerly lowering to rest lightly on George's hips regardless. He inhaled shakily when the shorter moved in even closer, their chests almost touching as the grip he had on George's body tightened in nerves, "George, *please*, you remember what happened last time. It's just gonna happen again and-."

"What *might* happen," George cut in to correct him, smiling up at him so softly that he managed to somehow surprise *himself*. Carefully, he stretched up to curl his arms around Dream's neck, moving closer and closer until the tips of their noses were just barely touching, "Is this okay?"

"More than," Dream muttered, eyes wide as green irises met blue and brown. The frown still hadn't left his lips, though, the fear of fucking up again or hurting George holding him back from giving in to their desires, "You *know* how bad I want to kiss you, George, but--"

"So *do* it," George quietly interrupted once more, his fingers lifting to soothingly scratch at the hairs on the nape of Dream's neck, "I want to, Dream, just as much as you do. It's *okay*, I promise."

"*Fuck*," Dream whispered hoarsely, his eyes fluttering shut as he slowly slid his hands underneath the hem of George's hoodie.

"Kiss me," George murmured, the desperation lacing his tone sending a visible shiver down Dream's spine. He tightened his grip on the younger boy's hair, stretching up even further until their lips were mere centimeters apart, "Fucking *kiss* me, Dream, *please*."

And Dream did.

George made a muffled noise of surprise when Dream bent down and lightly slotted their lips together, his eyes automatically closing from the soft impact. It was different than last time- much, *much* different. Dream was moving his lips slowly and with extreme caution, acting as though he was scared anything more would cause George to shatter.

It was nice to be treated like he was delicate for once, George thought, like he was something precious and to be handled with care. Dream kissed him the way George imagined an *actual* first kiss should be, all soft and sweet in a way that made butterflies flutter around in their stomachs- and for Dream, it kinda was.

The tenderness didn't last for very long, though, not when Dream's grip on his waist was growing gradually tighter the longer the kiss went on. George briefly wondered just how hard Dream was trying to restrain himself, how amazing his self-control was to be able to kiss the guy he's into whilst in pre-rut. His thoughts were promptly shut down when Dream's sharp nails started digging into the fat on his hips, causing his brain to short circuit momentarily.

"Shit," George breathed against his lips, tugging him into another kiss as his looped arms grew impossibly tighter around Dream's neck.

Dream responded with something like a growl, curling his arms fully around George's waist as he tried to pull him in even closer. It didn't work, obviously, as they were both already completely pressed together- but George still thought it was hot regardless.

George let out a quiet gasp when Dream's tongue prodded at his mouth, and immediately parted his pink lips to let him in. Dream's slowly started to languidly lick against George's own tongue, acting

as though George was already his and he was simply just reclaiming him once more.

Said possessiveness was still there, though, scalding his mouth whenever Dream's tongue did something as simple as lick behind his teeth. George whined when one of Dream's hands lifted to tangle in the messier hair at the back of his head, pushing their lips together so hard that George could almost feel them bruising.

"George," Dream muttered as he pulled away, unable to stop himself from pressing a few more chaste kisses against his swollen lips. George slowly opened his eyes again at the sound of his name, staring up at Dream with lustful blown-out pupils, "Fuck, don't look at me like that."

"I'm not doing anything," George murmured back, blinking a few times to try and clear the haze from his mind. When he came back to, the first thing he noticed was the slight red tinge to Dream's own eyes, something that instantly set off the alarm bells in his head again.

Carefully, George cupped the sides of Dream's head, dragging him down until his face was buried in the crook of his neck. He knew that he was ultimately scentless thanks to his suppressants, but also knew that the action was a comforting thing regardless of scents or gender.

"Sorry, you looked a little out of it," George quietly apologized, stroking the back of Dream's head as the taller nuzzled against him a tad firmer, "I thought this might help."

"It is helping," Dream replied against his skin, his hot breath sending barely noticeable shivers down George's back, "Thank you."

They stood in silence for a few moments, George simply playing with Dream's hair as the other absorbed his not-really-there scent like a drug. Eventually, Dream pulled away with a yawn, dropping his head on top of George's own as he slumped against him.

"Sap was right earlier, I think," Dream mumbled absentmindedly, loosely wrapping his arms around George's waist, "You *do* smell a little different."

"Huh?" George froze, one of his hands instantaneously lifting to smack against his scent gland, "What do you mean?"

"I dunno, you just smell sweeter? It's nice," Dream answered, completely oblivious to George's panic or movements in his tired state, "Did you get a new body wash or somethin'?"

"Yeah, that must be it," George carefully replied, his hand tightening protectively over his neck. Did he forget to take his scent suppressants today? That had to be it- there was literally no other explanation. If he went and took one now, everything would be back to normal tomorrow.

"Let's get you to bed, yeah?" George said with a forced grin, taking Dream's hand with his free one to pull him in the direction of the living room, "You seem exhausted."

Dream nodded in reply, too sleepy to be able to get any words out. George internally wondered if his scent was the cause, something in it being the reason behind Dream's sudden tiredness- but that would be ridiculous, right? If he *had* forgotten to take his suppressant, then there was still no way for it to be losing its previous effects fast enough for him to suddenly have the ability to affect people's moods like normal Alphas and Omegas could.

George gently pushed Dream down onto the couch, barely noticing his other friend's passed-out expressions in his panic. He glanced up at the clock, wincing when he saw that it was already one o'clock. It explained Dream's exhaustion, at least. They must've been talking *way* longer than he'd originally thought.

He picked up one of his neatly folded blankets from before and draped it over Dream's lanky body, mailing fondly when the younger boy instantly snuggled into it, George hesitated for a moment before giving in, bending down to press a sweet kiss to Dream's slightly damp forehead.

Weird.

George gave him one last wary look before shaking it off, moving to grab another blanket to place on Quackity. He continued the practice several times over, not stopping until each one of his friends had been tucked into a warm blanket with a soft kiss placed on their foreheads.

Afterward, he raced his way upstairs and into his bathroom, almost forgetting to shut the door quietly behind him as to not wake anyone up in his haste. Once he'd triple-checked that he'd locked the door behind him, he started rummaging through his medicine cabinet, spotting and grabbing his suppressants within seconds.

"Please work, please work, please work-" George chanted to himself, screwing his eyes shut as he dry swallowed one of the pills. It might've just been the placebo effect calming his anxiety down, but he immediately felt better after taking it- if not a bit sick and tired.

He slowly finished up in the bathroom, brushing his teeth and changing into a pair of sweats before exiting the room again. He debated going to sleep in his nest, ut the thought of one of his friends waking up to find him, only to enter his room and see it, instantly put him off.

With a groan, he trundled back downstairs, turning off the TV and all the lights still on before flopping down on the couch again. George knew that his pills were working again when a familiar cold chill ran through his body, causing him to snuggle up against the warmest thing he could find.

With that, he fell asleep, body curled around another person's as he unconsciously fought off the cold.

Chapter End Notes

thank you so so much for 23k hits! that means the world to me <3 i love and appreciate all of you so much.

i hope you enjoyed! the theories you guys have been leaving in the comments keep making me laugh (in a good way lol), i love reading them sm :D next chapter is a "big" chapter, so the update might not be out until a bit later on :]

also, i haven't proofread this yet, so if you'd rather wait until it is please check back tomorrow! i'm sorry for any mistakes, i was in a bit of a rush to get this chapter out <3

End Notes

thank you all again for reading! comments and kudos are super appreciated, but absolutely not necessary <3

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